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ABSTRACT

This review describes the types of adult literacy practices in current use and identifies those found to be particularly effective. The report is organized around the program areas of: (1) methods and materials; (2) testing and evaluation; (3) outreach and recruitment; (4) learner retention; and (5) program management. The review demonstrates the variety of approaches to teaching both native-English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults. The literature points to the importance of identifying adults' strengths and weaknesses relative to instructional delivery, because this may be the deciding factor in keeping adults in the program. Of particular interest were discussions of the debate between phonics and whole-language approaches to teaching adults. While phonics was found to have a place in instruction, teaching methods that emphasized meaning or learner goals were more popular in adult literacy programs. The assessment of student progress and the evaluation of program success were acknowledged as vital components to program development and delivery. A very important characteristic of a successful program was the presence of a good leader. (Contains 2 tables and 195 references.) (SLD)

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REDUCING ILLITERACY: REVIEW OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

VOLUME I

Ronald W. Solórzano

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Princeton, New Jersey
March 1993

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Reducing Illiteracy: Review of Effective Practices in Adult Literacy Programs

Volume I

March, 1993

Ronald W. Solórzano, Ph.D.
Educational Testing Service
(Southern California Field Office)

Notice

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Table of Contents

Forward i

Abstract ii

Introduction 1

I. Instructional Methods and Materials 4

Special Issues 4

o pedagogy vs. andragogy
o incorporating adults' goals in the instructional process
o recognizing learners' perceptions of the reading and writing process

Methods 8

o phonics-based approaches
o whole-language approaches
o language experience approach
o critical thinking methods
o life-skills instruction
o instructional group size
o teacher characteristics

How is Instruction Targeted to Meet the Unique Needs of Language Minority Groups? 17

o importance of ESL learners' background
o identifying ESL learners' reading strategies
o ESL instructional methods

Materials 27

What Materials do Programs Use for Learners Who are Low-literate in Their Native Language and English? 30

What Materials do Programs Use for Learners Who are Literate in Their Native Language and Low-literate in English? 32

How are Materials Selected? 33

II. Testing and Evaluation 35

How is Learner Performance Monitored? 37

How are Programs Evaluated? 38

- o what is evaluation?
- o what needs to be evaluated and how?

What Makes a Successful Program? 43

III. Outreach and Recruitment 46

What Media or Printed Material Strategies do Programs Use to Recruit Volunteer Tutors? 48

How are the Low-literate Language Minority Populations Recruited? 51

IV. Learner Retention 53

Reasons Learners Leave Programs 53

Reasons Learners Stay in Programs 56

V. Program Management 60

What Kinds of Human and Fiscal Resources do Programs Have? 61

- o Human Resources
  - * other human support services
  - * counseling
  - * reading specialists/diagnosticians
  - * training
- o Fiscal Resources

What are the Costs of Maintaining Programs? 63

What are the Leadership Qualities of Those Who Manage the Programs? 64

VI. Summary 68

VII. Bibliography 70

Forward

The issue of adult literacy has gained wide notoriety in recent years. Nationally funded *Centers* have cropped up that address the various areas of adult literacy ranging from family practices to instruction and assessment strategies. In 1991, the National Institute for Literacy was begun which provided resources for researching and addressing many of the issues related to adult literacy. Congress has mandated the National Adult Literacy Survey to determine the literacy skills/levels of our nation's adults.

As the interest in adult literacy continues to grow, the need for answers to the many perplexing problems confronting practitioners in the field becomes crucial. Based on this rationale, the following represents a comprehensive review of the literature on effective practices in adult literacy programs compiled from studies, evaluation reports, books, articles and other printed materials -- published and unpublished.

The purpose of this report is to provide the reader with a basic understanding of some of the issues related to adult literacy and to provide information on practices that have been shown to be effective. Interested readers can pursue -- in-depth -- any of the topics outlined in this report by referencing the extensive bibliography (Section VII).

The current report is organized around five program areas:

1) methods and materials,
2) testing and evaluation,
3) outreach and recruitment,
4) learner retention, and
5) program management.

This list is not intended to represent all possible program areas, however, the current report focused in on these five. Further, although treated as discrete sections in the text, these areas do -- in fact -- overlap since many of these components are interrelated. Thus, certain issues recur in different contexts in various sections of this report.

As mentioned above, the various sources cited in this volume (e.g., reports, articles, books, evaluations, studies) represent data gathered from descriptive studies, controlled studies, surveys, interviews, etc. In this sense, the reader is cautioned to examine the program context of the effective practice before generalizing to other populations. On the other hand, the diversity of data sources (triangulation) also has a "verifying effect" when similar practices keep cropping up time and time again. The multiplicity of data sources thus provides a breadth of the issues and/or field of study. When addressing topics in this fashion, a general theme could surface relative to effective practices. This report identifies these themes.

Abstract

The present volume begins to examine the many issues related to adult literacy and identifies some promising practices taken from the literature via reports, evaluations, books, articles, etc.

Special issues of teaching adults were addressed such as instructional theories of pedagogy and andragogy or the use of teaching methods and materials developed for children versus those developed or appropriate for adults.

Incorporating adult learners' goals into the instructional program was discussed as an important feature in adult literacy programs. Related to this point is the importance of recognizing and understanding learners' perceptions of reading and writing and how this might explain why adults are having problems in these areas.

The review acknowledges the use of teaching approaches that center on phonics, whole-language, or a combination of the two. Data point out that the language experience approach (LEA) is a popular instructional method as are variations of this approach that emphasize community awareness and problem solving strategies.

Non-English speaking adults present a special challenge to literacy providers. Identifying literacy-related strengths that limited-English proficient adults bring to the instructional setting in their native language can be advantageous to subsequent English literacy acquisition.

Finding relevant adult instructional materials remains a problem area in instructional approaches. "Real-life" type of materials that represent adult literacy demands are viewed more favorably than skills/drills-based types.

Most adult literacy programs were dissatisfied with current assessment instruments -- but used some commercially developed standardized test, usually to satisfy a funding source. Linking assessment to instructionally relevant materials remains the basic problem. Although the purpose of the test should be well-understood while interpreting learner progress, linking assessment to instruction is a significant curriculum factor. New assessments that emphasize "real-life" tasks, and contain materials that emphasize problem solving or cognitive skills show particular promise. Some programs were experimenting with alternative forms of evaluating learner progress by monitoring changes in learners' attitudes, literacy habits, and goal attainment.

Program evaluation was identified as integral to overall program operations. The literature noted that leadership qualities of adult literacy program managers included the willingness to conduct or provide for such evaluations.

Outreach and recruitment efforts that emphasized the different nature of the literacy program to adults appeared to keep learners longer. Providing support services ranging from transportation to counseling also helped retain learners. The timing of support services was an important factor as well.

Leadership qualities are considered an important characteristic for program managers. Diversifying funding sources, monitoring program operations, and proving the "glue" to keep personnel working towards program goals are the qualities that successful program managers exhibit.

Although work remains to be done in identifying effective practices in adult literacy (perhaps in "controlled" settings), this report identified program areas and described effective practices that can lay the basis for further inquiry and/or possible replication.

Reducing Illiteracy:
Review of Effective Practices
in Adult Literacy Programs

Volume I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Most of the data for this study were gathered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Southern California Field Office (SCFO), as part of a study on effective practices in adult literacy programs conducted for the California State Department of Education (SDE). Data were gathered from the following four literacy service delivery areas: 1) community colleges, 2) adult schools (Adult Basic Education [ABE] programs), 3) libraries, and 4) community based organizations (CBO's)[1].

In order to address effective practices in adult literacy programs, ETS project staff developed a comprehensive research design to include the following components:

Background Data:

* review of the literature

Empirical Data[2]:

* nationwide telephone survey of exemplary adult literacy programs
* site visits to exemplary adult literacy programs

This report will present the results of an extensive review of the literature from the following sources:

1. program evaluations and research studies,
2. journal articles and books related to the field of adult literacy, and
3. other materials (e.g., unpublished reports/documents, newsletters, papers presented at adult literacy conferences).

The literature review is organized into five program areas. All program categories and research questions are listed below.

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[1] These categories are not exclusive of all literacy providers (correctional, military, JTPA programs) but were identified in the California State Department of Education RFP, and thus, were the focus of this review.

[2] The empirical data section is forthcoming in Volume II of this series.

I. Methods and Materials

Special Issues

* Pedagogy and Andragogy as appropriate theories for teaching adults.
* Incorporating learners' goals in the instructional process.
* Recognizing learners' perceptions of the reading and writing process.
* What instructional methods do programs use?

Methods

* How is instruction targeted to meet the unique needs of language minority groups?
* Importance of ESL learners' background.
* Identifying ESL learners' reading strategies.
* ESL instructional methods.

Materials

* What materials do programs use for learners who are illiterate in their native language and English?
* What materials do programs use for learners who are literate in their native language and illiterate in English?
* How are materials selected?

II. Testing and Evaluation

How is learner performance monitored?
How are programs evaluated?
What makes a successful program?

III. Outreach and Recruitment

What media or printed material strategies do programs use to recruit volunteer tutors?
How are the low-literate language minority populations recruited?

IV. Learner Retention

Reasons learners leave programs.
Reasons learners stay in programs.

V. Program Management

What kinds of fiscal and human resources do programs have?

- * Human Resources

    - o other human support services
    - o counseling
    - o reading specialist/diagnostician
    - o training

- * Fiscal Resources

What are the costs of maintaining programs?
What are the leadership qualities of those who manage programs?

Procedures

Three computer searches were conducted related to adult literacy effective practices. In addition, project staff solicited the assistance of the ETS Princeton Library to secure inter-library loans from various libraries to acquire materials that had been archived or discontinued. Since much of the data related to adult literacy practices are contained in reports, unpublished reports and evaluations, papers delivered at conferences, etc., manuscripts were ordered directly from the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) or obtained directly from the authors themselves. Finally, members of this study's Advisory Committee were asked to recommend articles and reports for ETS to review. Results from these data sources were examined and organized around the five topic areas listed above.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND MATERIALS

This section begins with a discussion of three areas that are significant to instruction of adults: 1) andragogy, 2) learner goals, 3) learner and teacher perceptions of reading and writing. Once these areas are addressed, instructional methods used in adult literacy programs or suggested in the literature as being effective practices will be presented. Following this discussion will be a review of effective practices relative to instructional materials.

Special Issues

Before discussing methods for teaching adults, three special issues related to teaching strategies come to mind. These issues are mentioned here because they impact the instructional delivery system. The issues are the following:

* inclusion of the theory of andragogy (how adults learn),
* the degree to which learner goals are considered in the instructional process, and
* learner and teacher perceptions of reading.

In many respects, how literacy programs address these issues reflects their instructional strategies. For this reason, they are considered important to the discussion on methods and materials.

Pedagogy vs. Andragogy. The discussion as to which methods are best for teaching reading has loomed for many years. In a sense, little differentiation has been made between strategies for educating adults and educating children. For instance, many school-based traditions in learner assessment (e.g., grade levels), modes of instruction (e.g., classroom based), and reading materials have been carried over from the K-12 traditions. Yet, for adult education, these traditions may not be appropriate. Mocker (1975) emphasizes the need for movement away from the pedagogy used with children (Quoted in Norman & Malicky, 1984).

Even though many have suggested a unique instructional delivery system for adults (Knowles, 1980; Boraks & Schumacher, 1981), Norman and Malicky (1984) state, "The most common type of adult literacy program both in the past and at the present is developmental in nature, incorporating the approaches and often even materials used with children" (p. 92). Harman (1984) states the issue as follows, "Are adult illiterates, from the point of view of the patterns which dictate their acquisition of reading skills at both basic and more advanced levels similar to children several decades younger or do they require different instructional approaches and curricula?" (p. 33). This issue will be discussed below.

Some suggest that teaching reading is the same for adults and children, therefore, research is borrowed from effective pedagogical methods used with school-age learners. Bowren and Zintz (1987) state that although teaching strategies may be different, "Reading develops in an orderly, sequential pattern regardless of the learner's age." Forester (1988) notes that when "Using a language-learning model as [a] theoretical foundation during inclass research, first in elementary school settings (Forester, 1975, 1977), and then with college students (Forester, 1980), [the data] revealed remarkable parallels in the processes at work in acquiring literacy."

Others recommend that "andragogy" and not "pedagogy" is more appropriate when referring to instructional strategies for adults (Bowren, 1987; Knowles, 1980). In this case, adults are seen as possessing substantial background experiences, coping methods and built-in strategies that make them more adept at learning to read. Knowles (1980) suggests that the most important characteristic of adult learners is that they are capable of self-direction. Yet, some note that perhaps field-independent learners embody the philosophy that adults are self-directed; field-dependent learners may still need help developing strategies for structuring their learning (Even, 1982).

In either case, it is not clear whether the different learning styles of adults result in better or worse performance compared to children at similar grade levels. For example, based on comparisons of adults and children reading at the fifth grade reading level, Sticht (1982) cautioned that one should not assume that adult literacy students will perform better or learn more quickly than children at comparable reading levels. Mikulecky (1986), cites the work of Leibert (1983) where the author found that for children (reading at comparable low levels as adults), accuracy and rate decreased as passages became more difficult, whereas adult readers demonstrated no comparable variability in accuracy but similar declines in rate (p. 23). Buchanan and Sherman (1981) suggest that adults do not learn in a rigidly fixed continuum, nor do their skills develop in a predictable hierarchy, thus further suggesting that traditional teaching methods used with children would not be appropriate with adults.

The different learning styles and reading strategies of adults must be researched further. Malicky and Norman (1982) suggest -- based on their study of reading strategies and "correctional behavior" related to "semantically unacceptable errors" -- that "These results support the argument that differences between children and adults are sufficiently great to indicate that the pedagogy of teaching reading to children is not appropriate for the teaching of adults" (p. 735). In another study by Malicky & Norman (1982), the authors note that "... it has been recognized that the differences between children and adults are sufficiently great that the methods and materials for teaching children to read are not appropriate for the teaching of adults" (p. 61).

Some even suggest that physical factors related to adults need to be taken into consideration during instruction. For instance, Longfield (1984) suggests, "Since adults do not see, hear, or react as quickly as children, they require more time for reaction and more practice for performance" (p. 8).

Crandall, Lerche, and Marchilonis (1984), found in their survey of effective programs that literacy educators have very different views of the cognitive psychological and social factors that influence adult learning. Some adult literacy programs are modeled on public school instruction, while others argue that this model is inappropriate for the adult learner. A closer picture of the learning patterns of adults, and an understanding of the nature of literacy practice that matches these learning patterns would assist literacy educators in designing more relevant instructional programs (p. 337).

Thus, based on assumptions on how adults learn, programs must determine how they will organize their instructional program, and this must be done at the beginning of instruction. As one national report suggests, good literacy providers assess the student's background knowledge, skills, and experience at orientation before planning lessons (U.S. Department of Education, 1988). An understanding of adults' strengths and differences, relative to instructional delivery, may be the deciding factor -- not only in keeping adults in the program, but in teaching them to read and write.

Incorporating adults' goals in the instructional process. Another important consideration for instructional practice is the extent to which learners' goals are incorporated into the instructional setting.

That is, how should methods relate to learner goals, background experiences, and needs, and to what extent should learners be involved in the planning of their own instruction? As Sticht (1990) notes,

> *"Learner-centered instruction in which the functional context of the learner dictates the curriculum differs from literacy education based on the idea that adult basic education should replicate the school grades and eventually lead to a high school equivalency certificate." He further explains, " ... a person desiring to learn to be an automobile mechanic is given reading, writing, and mathematics education using automobile mechanics training textbooks or technical manuals ... adults desiring to read a tax manual can be taught using a tax manual and special materials to develop "specific" ability in reading tax manuals" (p. 22).*

Adults join and stay in literacy programs because they believe they will benefit from what they learn. Simply being literate is not always the adult's motivation for coming to the literacy program, although literacy is usually necessary for accomplishing the goal (U.S. Department of Education, 1988). Echoing this thought, Fingeret and Jurmo (1989) suggest a participatory approach to education that is based on the belief that learner characteristics, backgrounds, and needs should be the center of literacy instruction (quoted in Santopieto & Peyton, 1991).

In some cases, program goals are not the same as learner goals. Johnson (1985) points out that "... client goals are not necessarily the same as program goals or those legislatively mandated and easily quantified" (p. 19). Yet incorporating learner goals into the instructional setting is necessary. As Phillips, Bellorado, and Robinson (1985), point out, "Much of the recent literature points out that student motivation and academic achievement are highest where interaction between staff and student are learner-centered as opposed to program-centered" (p. 2). The authors identify three types of programs: 1) those emphasizing academic and job skills, 2) those programs emphasizing human development goals, and 3) those emphasizing empowerment. The authors found in their review of 15 exemplary programs that the decision as to which methods or materials to be used during instruction depends on the program's orientation to literacy.

In a study which analyzed information from a "response group" of 20 national service providers, Mayer (1985) outlined characteristics of effective adult literacy programs. He reports that, with regard to instruction, "a literacy program should choose its instructional strategies and materials to help each adult learner progress towards his/her learning goals." Similarly, Padak and Padak (1987) suggest that for adult basic reading programs, instruction should be based on theoretical knowledge about the reading process (which according to the authors should be comprehension-based); should address the adult's affective needs; and, be personally satisfying for the adult.

Crandall et al. (1984) -- after surveying 168 adult literacy programs -- report that "our discussion of instructional methods and materials illustrates that the only sure direction is one that is focused on learner needs and interests" (p. 221). However, these same authors found while examining assessment practices of programs in their sample that, "[Learner] Interest or vocational inventories and learning style assessments are rare. This is surprising considering the frequency with which educators mention tailoring instruction to student interests and learning style" (p. 162).

Although many literacy programs state that they are learner centered, many, in reality, do not involve the learner in the instructional process. In a study by Wurzbacher and Yeannakis (1986), it was reported that volunteer projects did not adequately involve students in the planning, operation and evaluation of the literacy project. Thus, including the adult learner in instructional planning is of great importance if programs expect to keep their attendance up. The U.S. Department of Education study on adult literacy recommends the following six suggestions:

1) find out why students have come to the program,
2) make sure the students participate in setting the goals,
3) give students a realistic picture of the time it will take to accomplish their goals,
4) avoid false promises,
5) acknowledge the courage that the adults have shown in coming forward, and
6) refer prospective students to another site in the community that can meet their expectations if the mission or capabilities of your literacy program cannot.

Clearly, therefore, learner goals and interests should be at the forefront of literacy instruction. If learners' reasons for participating in literacy programs is not addressed, they will make little progress and eventually drop out. Some programs -- mentioned below -- base instruction exclusively on learners' interest by using methods ranging from the language experience approach (LEA), to a sequenced structured phonics-based approach, or some combination of both.

Recognizing learners' perceptions of the reading and writing process. Research suggests that learners' perceptions of what constitutes reading plays a role in their eventual reading progress. The question becomes, Does one adapt instruction to meet these learner perceptions or do teachers/tutors attempt to change the learner's perception of reading to fit the program's instructional method or philosophy of reading acquisition? For example, there is evidence that learners may have a decoding perception of reading (sounding out the words) or a meaning-getting focus (understanding what the sentence/paragraph is saying). Hall, Richardson and Ramig (1976) found that "adult students often define reading as decoding, or getting the letters..." This finding has been supported by other research as well (Taylor, Wade, Jackson, Blum & Goold, 1980).

Raisner (1978) investigated the reading miscues of 14 nonproficient readers at a state college and found that these adults relied heavily on graphophonic (relationship between letters and sounds) information. Some suggest that this perception of reading may actually hold back the learner from trying to read a complete passage feeling that being able to sound out all the words is a prerequisite to understanding the text (Forester, 1988). Boraks and Schumacher (1981) also reported that "Perhaps the skill focus itself [decoding] misleads the adult beginning reader (ABR) who may come to think they can read if they have learned specific decoding skills" (p. 10).

Meyer and Keefe (1980), examined the reading models that 100 adults used in reading and reported that the "...disabled adult reader views reading as a task involving sound and word identification" (p. 120). The authors caution, however, "...remember that the model of reading the adult reader has in his/her head may be the disabler. Limited evidence with our one-hundred subjects has revealed that those few readers in adult reading programs who have a meaning model of reading in their heads are the learners who are making significant progress" (p. 124).

Lytle et al., (1986), also observed that 70% of the adults surveyed viewed reading as primarily decoding and half viewed writing as spelling. The authors point out, "Enhancing their understanding of the metacognitive aspects of reading and writing may be critical to achieving their goals" (p. 32).

Therefore, programs may need to consider how the learner (and perhaps the teacher) perceives the reading and writing process and determine if these perceptions are creating barriers to subsequent literacy improvement.

An understanding of these three aspects of adult learners -- andragogy, incorporating learners' goals into the instructional delivery systems, and identifying learners' perceptions of the reading process -- can have a profound impact on learner outcomes. In sum, an understanding of how adults learn, why they want to learn, and what they think learning is, can help programs design appropriate interventions that can make a difference in learners' subsequent literacy improvement.

Methods

In most cases, the instructional methods used by a program are related to that program's particular philosophy of adult literacy. As Valentine (1986) suggests, "...general literacy can be expressed solely in terms of an individual's reading and writing ability without considering the broader social context, while functional literacy must be expressed as an individual's reading and writing ability in relation to the reading and writing tasks imposed by, or existing in, the environment in which that individual resides and seeks to function" (p. 109). These definitions are similar to those proposed by Hunter and Harman (1979), in which they make the distinction between "Conventional Literacy" and "Functional Literacy."

Echoing a functional approach, Kirsch and Jungeblut (1986) define literacy as "Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." In this case, literacy is seen as reading and interpreting prose, as in newspaper articles, magazines, and books; identifying and using information located in documents such as forms, tables, charts and indexes; and applying numerical operations to information contained in printed material such as a menu, a checkbook, or an advertisement (p. 3).

Programs define adult literacy in many ways, thus, after deciding on the definition of literacy, instruction can be addressed. In this sense, the adult literacy field is grappling with the same concerns that the K-12 educational system has for decades, i.e., whether to provide instruction to learners using a phonics-based or whole language-based approach. Advocates of the phonics approaches cite years of evidence in successfully teaching children to read (Chall, 1989), whereas others refute such claims and argue for a more holistic language-based approach (Carbo, 1988).

Crandall et al. (1984) surveyed 168 adult literacy programs nationwide and gathered data on the various methods that programs used. They found "two distinct approaches" to reading instruction for adults that treat reading as either a "sequential skills" approach or a "language-based" approach. In explaining the phonetic approach, the authors suggest that the technique is like "assembling a car." "It is essential that each worker insert his part at exactly the right stage in the assembly process." The authors state that this example is assumed to be similar to reading; "small incremental steps, or skills, are identified which lead to the ultimate goal of reading comprehension."

The phonetic approach, also called a "bottom up" or "text-driven" approach (Goodman, 1979), implies that the most important task is decoding sound-symbol relationships (Pearson & Kamil, 1978;

Gough, 1976).

On the other hand, the whole-language approach is based on different instructional premises. Crandall et al. (1984) observe that the language-based approach is "Like learning to talk ... given enough exposure to real language, with some specific 'helps' along the way, the adult will finally integrate the information and use the necessary processes to gain meaning from print." The "top-down" theory is considered "reader-driven," where the reader operates actively without dependence on the text (Goodman, 1979).

These illustrations of adult reading instruction are similar to those identified by Balmuth (1987). In her review and analysis of effective adult literacy programs, she states that, "In general, the methods that have been identified in the ABE studies have tended to be either carefully structured and sequenced on the one hand, with a strong phonics component or, on the other hand, less structured, informal, and with incidental phonics." These distinctions parallel the above-mentioned review of the predominant approaches to teaching reading.

The methods presented below will include phonics and language-based approaches as well as other teaching strategies identified in the literature by adult literacy practitioners and from studies conducted on literacy programs.

Phonics-based approaches. Some suggest that a phonics-based approach for older students should not be downplayed and that this approach's contribution to the reading process is actually misunderstood (Lewkowicz, 1987). This author suggests that "decoding is a comprehension skill, which contributes to comprehension not only at the word level, but also at the sentence, paragraph, and whole-text levels" (p. 51).

Phonetic approaches -- when used with carefully sequenced materials -- have shown success for low-literate adults. For example, in a community-based organization in Ohio, Pasch and Oakley (1985) found that learners improved 1 grade level after 50 hours of instruction using Laubach Way to Reading materials. Similar results were found in South Carolina (Quickel & Wise, 1982). In this study -- a joint effort between the local Literacy Council and school district in Horry County -- non-reading and poor reading adults were tutored by volunteers using the Laubach method. Improvement in reading levels was noted based on scores from the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE).

In California, many of the library-based programs in the California Literacy Campaign use Laubach materials to monitor learner progress (Solórzano & Stecher, 1987). This phonetic-based approach appears to be popular with volunteer tutors because it is sequenced and "layed-out" in a series of skillbooks where both tutors and learners can easily track progress.

Rather than viewing phonics and language-based instruction as an "either-or" situation, one could view phonics as an initial strategy or preliminary step toward achieving subsequent comprehension skills. At that later point, new strategies -- involving whole-language approaches -- will eventually be needed for the learner to achieve higher levels of comprehension.

One study suggests this might, indeed, be the case (Malicky & Norman, 1982). These researchers investigated the reading strategies used by "adult illiterates" in an adult basic education setting and analyzed these strategies relative to gains made while participating in the adult basic education program. Specifically, the authors studied entry level reading strategies used by both adult illiterates who did and those who did not make progress in an adult basic education program, and the changes in reading strategies learners made over time as they received literacy instruction. Using the Reading Miscue Inventory (Goodman & Burke, 1972), the authors studied three miscue categories: 1) Graphophonic, 2) Grammatical, and 3) Semantic. The results showed that, "the no-gain subjects entered the treatment period with heavier reliance on the graphophonic cueing system (attending more closely to letters and words) and less reliance on the grammatical system than did the high gain group."

In relation to changes in reading strategies over time, the no-gain group showed decreased reliance on graphophonic cues and increased use of the grammatical cueing system. By the end of the treatment period, the profile of strategies used by the no-gain group was highly similar to that of the gain group at the latter group's time of entry. The authors conclude that "many students who entered the program with heavy attention to graphic cues and limited use of their knowledge of the language structure needed to reverse this emphasis before they were able to make progress on comprehension measures" (p. 735).

Since, according to Balmuth (1987), evidence in favor of direct decoding instruction at the very early levels of reading is well documented, perhaps once these learners begin increasing their literacy levels, they need to build their comprehension skills. Remaining in a phonics-based program may be sending the wrong message to the learner about the reading process. As Jones (1981) points out, "...the adult basic reader tends to think of reading as a process of decoding with precise accuracy ... as a consequence, he is apt to feel ... that he cannot read a passage in which he cannot identify each word" (p. 81). This problem also occurs with learners' perceptions of writing -- since they feel that they cannot write unless they can spell each word correctly (Forester, 1988).

Thus, not all programs use phonics-based programs alone. Crandall et al. (1984) reported in their survey that, "some educators feel strongly that pure phonics has limited success with adult learners." They go on to identify three reasons: " 1) most students in adult literacy programs have already 'failed' with phonics in school; 2) phonics is too abstract and too removed from the 'real world' of reading; and 3) phonics is too laborious."

Perhaps these are reasons why adult literacy programs use a combination of phonics and comprehension strategies for instructing adults (Koen & Musemeci, 1984). When phonics is combined with language-based approaches, some success is incurred. For example, in a three-year study in Jefferson County, Kentucky, Darling (1981) found that "The most beneficial adult literacy curriculum should revolve around a sound, proven basic series, which includes decoding and comprehension skills presented in a sequential manner..."

Taylor et al. (1980) suggest that incorporating both the decoding process and comprehension activities helps learners become better readers. Interestingly, in their study, they reported that "low literate" students stated that such instructional techniques as "sounding out words" were the most effective for their reading progress." The authors suggest that some poor readers "seemed to define reading as decoding proficiency." For instance, some learners felt that if they worked on vowel sounds and syllables, they would become better readers (p. 72). The authors found, however, that a somewhat larger group appeared to reflect a different perception of reading. They knew that in addition to the decoding process they needed to have an understanding of the meaning that the print was conveying (p. 73). This again underlines the importance of learners' perceptions of the reading process and its effect on their subsequent reading progress.

Whole-language approaches. Others suggest that instructional methods should allow adults to focus more of their attention on the information communicated by what they're reading rather than solely on the technical skills of reading and writing. Authors of the U.S. Department of Education's study Adult Literacy: Building Programs That Work, suggest a place for phonics instruction coupled with a need to place words in a meaningful context as well. The authors state that "Getting at the information is often the motivation [of learners] for overcoming reading difficulties. Even in basic literacy programs, which should include phonics instruction, the words students learn should be placed as early as possible in a context that is significant to them" (p. 30).

Teaching the adult beginning reader is indeed a challenging task and many programs can use suggestions on successful instructional strategies. Boraks and Richardson (1981) have suggested the following eight practices for teaching reading to the Adult Beginning Reader (ABR):

1) teachers should help adults manage their time for maximum reading practice with minimal lesson time,
2) initial reading instruction may be best presented with materials in which adults have expressed a utilitarian interest,
3) adults must interact with the greater social/cultural environment to encourage more generalization in dealing with print,
4) adults should be encouraged to identify and organize their own approach to word recognition,
5) students will comprehend better when they can focus on the organization of the materials,
6) instruction should not stress the abstract (letter/sound) aspect of the reading process,
7) features or word cues most likely to be present when recall is required should be stressed when new materials are introduced, and
8) adults may learn more quickly using materials representing a relatively concrete level of experience.

The authors suggest that "we know ABRs are practiced and drilled, not taught (i.e., passive not active); and that ABRs, indeed adult non-proficient readers at all levels, view and process words as visual or phonemic units not semantic units..." (p. 2). Therefore, the authors recommend instructional practices that "a) broaden the social/cultural context of the learner, b) help the ABR become an active learner, and c) stress reading as a meaning process."

Stressing "reading as meaning" has been supported by previous research (Meyer & Keefe, 1980). These authors found that "adults who were poor readers did not read for sentence and passage meaning as does the proficient reader. Instead, these adults viewed reading as a task which involved "sounding out" (phonics model) and word identification (whole word/skills model)" (p. 135). The authors go on to state that "A noteworthy finding was that adults who had 'a reading for meaning' orientation improved on standardized reading test scores an average of 1/2 to 2 years in a period of three months of reading instruction" (p. 135).

Language experience approach. While questioning the appropriateness of a phonics-based method for adults, many suggest a language experience approach (LEA) to teach reading and writing. Gillis and Longnion (1982), for instance, note that "such approaches which consider knowledge of sound-symbol relationships a prerequisite to reading and thus delay the reading of sentences, paragraphs, and larger units until phonics skills are mastered, may not be the most effective for use with adults (p. 86). The authors also suggest that "part of the reason [for adult high attrition in literacy programs] might be the phonics methods used in many ABE classes to reading." They recommend that one method teachers of adults can use to create 'instant readers' is the language experience approach" (p. 88).

Similarly, Boraks & Richardson (1985) and Hall (1981) state that teachers should not emphasize an abstract/symbol approach to reading but rather should stress related words and meaning by teaching reading using functional materials or language-experience programs.

Crandall et al. (1984) found that of those programs using a language-based instructional strategy, language experience approach and classroom oral reading were the common approaches (p. 187). Norman and Malicky (1984) suggest that a "process-functional approach" to teaching adults to read is an alternative to currently used "skill programs" (p. 99). The authors state that "... a major shift in adult basic education has been to more functional types of literacy programs." The authors continue, "The most common techniques suggested by those who advocate a functional program is the language experience approach" (p. 93).

The lack of meaningful (functional) instruction may not only prevent transfer of reading skills, but may be the cause of high attrition as well. For adults functioning below the fourth grade level, Mikulecky (1986) reports that "... many programs and tutors allocate more time and resources to general literacy training emphasizing decoding, word attack and literal level understanding of non-functional stories. Research indicates that such approaches are associated with higher attrition, much lower transfer of reading gain, and much higher loss of gain after as little as six weeks" (p. 28).

Santopieto and Peyton (1991) quote a study by Bean et al., (1989) where they found that factors contributing to learner attrition in adult literacy programs included inappropriate placement and instructional materials and approaches that were not relevant to learners' needs and lives.

Lately (perhaps because of the popularity of language experience approaches), much more attention has been given to the importance of writing as it relates to learners' background experiences. Since adults often have a wide variety of experiences, the emphasis on writing with beginning readers can be beneficial to literacy gains. Thistlethwaite (1983) suggests that some students may increase their reading abilities through their attempts to write.

Developing writing skills can improve learners' comprehension in reading. One possible reason for this, as Young and Irwin (1988) suggest, is that "Incorporating writing within an adult literacy program builds upon these relationships and, at the same time, makes use of the wealth of background knowledge that the learners bring with them." The study by Crandall et al. (1984) of effective programs suggests the place of writing in adult literacy programs as well. For instance, the authors noted that "another option to workbooks is student writing...many teachers build lessons from language experience stories or from materials students bring in."

Finally, some LEA approaches emphasize listening before writing. In this case, integrating the learner's previous experiences in a "meaning" approach can possibly affect other language arts areas (e.g., listening) in addition to reading. Gold and Johnson (1982) report that adult beginning readers provided with individual psychoeducational tutoring (DL-LEA) demonstrated significant gains in reading, self-esteem, auding and verbal language. This method of psychoeducational tutoring combines directed listening (DL) activities with the language experience approach (LEA), (thus the name DL-LEA), to foster reading improvement.

Although writing is an important literacy activity, some feel that the learners' perceptions of their spelling inadequacies may prevent them from wanting to write. In one case study (Forester, 1988), the teacher allowed the learner to improvise on the spellings rather than wait to get the correct spelling before proceeding to write. As a result of using approximations of spellings of words, the learner wrote (practiced) more, and subsequently both writing and reading improved. In this case, the learner moved from writing words, to phrases, to sentences and finally to extended text. The author goes on to recommend that instructors should teach reading as "meaning-making" and recommends the following ten instructional strategies (pp. 609-611):

1) help students realize how familiar they are with print,
2) use discussion to link sight words with student interests,
3) encourage students to work as partners or in small groups based on shared interests, not based on ability level,
4) model fluent reading for your students whenever it seems appropriate,
5) in one-to-one sessions with the students, encourage them to read along with you as you read aloud,
6) get books on tape from the library and produce personalized tapes for students,
7) use cloze materials to reinforce the use of syntactic, semantic and experiential aids to making meaning,
8) to foster reading practice, discuss their reasons for wanting to learn to read with your students, either singly or in groups,
9) invite students to bring in their own reading materials, and
10) trust students to find their level.

Critical thinking methods. Another instructional feature emphasizes the teaching of critical thinking skills. Developing adults' critical thinking skills is an important instructional component. Teaching strategies for developing adults' critical thinking has been recommended (Jarvis, 1985; Goudreau, 1986), and associated with small group "learning circles" (Noddings, 1984; Kazemek, 1988). As Kazemek states, "A learning circle relies on such activities as discussion, writing and sharing journals, writing and reading language-experienced texts, reading with the assistance of a partner, modeling by instructor and peers, and group rereading of various texts (including commonly selected commercially published textbooks) as well as on practice reading strategies guided by an instructor..." (p. 481).

Similar to the discussion component of "learning circles" Freire uses "culture circles" to discuss the problems of illiteracy as well as other problems that equally affect learners' lives, such as poverty, nationalism, democracy and development. The method attempts to raise adults' consciousness while eliminating their illiteracy. In the Freire method, literacy students are subjects rather than objects of learning. The students become critical thinkers about their reality instead of simply being fed (banking) a body of information which they did not possess or which was not necessarily part of their lives (Freire, 1974). As with the language experience approach, Freire's method builds on the knowledge which the learner already possesses. Several adult literacy programs in the United States have implemented Freire's methodology (Spener, 1990).

Learners' dialectic preference and instructional methods may be related to subsequent reading achievement. Weber (1986) conducted an examination of dialect differences in learners and its impact on learning. She points out that dialect differences are a significant factor in learning to read for English speaking adults although she maintains that instructors do not take advantage of these dialect differences. On the contrary, "programs with 'bottom-up' approaches to reading which reify materials as instruction and which dwell on phonics and short passages may exaggerate the significance of dialect differences" (p. 145).

Life skills instruction. Some programs find teaching both life skills and basic skills is beneficial to the learner. Darkenwald (1986), reported that the most effective programs in his study integrated a basic skills focus with instruction in life or survival skills needed by students to function effectively in the everyday world. In fact, studies show that if learners are not taught relevant literacy skills they can use in their daily lives, they will revert back to former lower literacy levels (Sticht, 1982; Scribner & Cole, 1978). Role playing real-life situations as a teaching strategy for adults to generate discussions and subsequent stories has been shown to be successful (Crutchfield, 1981).

In many cases where programs combine life skills with instruction, some form of competency-based instruction is used. Crandall et al. (1984) reported that competency-based instruction "is not a method, but an instructional management system...which combines diagnosis, instruction, assessment, and evaluation." The authors continue, "competency based systems can be 'home grown' or pre-packaged" (p. 3-89).

One competency-based system used by adult literacy programs in California which receive federal Section 306 funds is the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). According to Rickard (1988), "CASAS is a comprehensive curriculum management and assessment system designed to provide agencies with effective assessment materials and procedures for all levels of Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), Pre-employment and high school completion programs for adult and secondary students" (p. 1). The CASAS system was accepted as exemplary by the National Diffusion Network and has been implemented in at least 150 programs in California which are receiving federal Adult Basic Education Act 306 funds. Preliminary results of data for learners using this system indicate that after approximately 100 hours of instruction, "on average, students gain 6-7 scale score points, or achieve approximately one-half a standard deviation..." (p. 6).

Another competency-based system (also accepted by the National Diffusion Network as exemplary) was developed by the Adult Performance Level Project. This project, commissioned by the U.S. Office of Education in 1970 was initiated to "establish standards of functional competency which are free of school-based notions of literacy" (Kazemek, 1985). One aspect of functional competency is defined as "two-dimensional and involves the application of a set of skills (reading, writing, speaking/listening, computing, and problem solving), to a set of knowledge areas; consumer economics, occupational knowledge, health, community resources, and government and law" (p. 24).

Using a different approach to traditional competency-based assessments, Kirsch & Jungeblut (1986) suggest that literacy can be viewed from three perspectives: 1) prose literacy, 2) document literacy, and 3) quantitative literacy. Using "real-life" open-ended tasks, learners' literacy levels are interpreted relative to their position on each of the three literacy scales identified above. Thus, a learner might score higher on document tasks than on prose-related or quantitative tasks. In this way, literacy is defined relative to learner performance in three areas (scales) and not merely one.

Instructional tasks and related materials can be developed that mirror the underlying cognitive competencies associated with the tasks from all three scales. For example, Kirsch and Mosenthal (1990) suggest that demonstrated performance on any given task reflects the interactions among the structure of the stimulus material, the content, and the nature of what the individual is asked to do with the material. The authors report: "As demonstrated by research based on the performance of the young adult literacy tasks [contained in the Young Adult Literacy Survey; 1986], these factors, operating in various combinations, affect the difficulty of a task and, therefore, its statistical characteristics and position relative to other tasks along one of the literacy scales." In this case, literacy is defined relative to three areas (representing three scales): prose, document and quantitative. Thus, instruction targeted to these cognitive skills could potentially improve adults' literacy levels.[3]

Instructional group size. Tied to instructional methods is the nature of the delivery system for providing that instruction. The different arrangements include one-on-one tutoring/teaching, small group instruction or classroom-based teaching (Crandall et al. 1984; SRA, 1987). Most ABE and community college programs use the whole classroom approach; library-based literacy programs usually use one-on-one tutoring; and community-based organizations use a combination of one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction.

The one-on-one approach allows the learner to receive individual attention from a tutor to work on specific skills and needs, whereas the small group gives learners an opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas and experiences. Opponents of the one-on-one method suggest that it isolates the learner and places a stigma on him/her because they are illiterate. Opponents of the group instruction methods note that learners are not getting the individual attention they need to improve their literacy skills.

The benefits and shortcomings of individualized and group learning have been debated for years. As Crandall et al. (1984) note, "Some educators feel passionately about individualized instruction while others support and defend group instruction." It's difficult to judge which method is best. Clearly, however, a committed program staff and teacher/tutor can make either work best for the learner.

Teacher characteristics. Teacher characteristics have been analyzed relative to effective programs (Phillips et al. 1985). The authors reported that interviewees mentioned the following traits in respect to teachers' effectiveness:

* class culture/gender sensitivity,
* willingness to praise, offer positive encouragement and emphasize students' strengths,
* ability to demonstrate high expectations,
* counseling skills, including personal, academic and vocational counseling,

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[3] Field testing of this concept is being conducted on two fronts. Simon & Schuster has developed practice materials that teach to these concepts, and ETS (Princeton) is developing a comprehensive instructional package that includes interactive video programing.

- communication skills, ability to convey caring,
- patience, flexibility, sense of humor, respect for students, friendliness, dedication, helpfulness, and
- creativity and skill at establishing a relaxed, safe, trusting classroom environment.

They go on to mention that programs which emphasized an "empowerment philosophy" ranked highest on all these measures while programs that emphasized skills development ranked lowest.

Emphasizing the blending of teaching and counseling, the U.S. Department of Education study suggests that teachers work with students to: 1) strengthen their self-concepts, 2) build morale and motivation, 3) clarify short and long-term goals, 4) attack and solve real-world problems, and 5) identify career possibilities. The authors warn, however, that literacy providers should not "... try to handle serious emotional or life crisis situations" (p. 26).

The importance of both the teachers' impact on learners and the message teachers send to learners relative to their reading strategies has been studied (Boraks & Schumacher, 1981). The authors state the following:

> *The way a teacher conducts a lesson provides a model for learning. When a teacher introduced words in isolation or focussed on decoding words, students tended to try to recall these words by dealing with their graphic features, not by decoding. When teachers preceded reading with a discussion of concepts in text, students tended to read for meaning and use context in identifying words. Students' beliefs about reading, perhaps guided by prior schooling, also influenced reading strategies: regardless of the skills or strategies being taught, students tried to learn words by their own system (usually by spelling words).*
>
> *It appears that what teachers teach is less important than how they teach; and how teachers teach is more effective if the taught strategy is believed in by the ABRs and modeled by teachers and peers (p. 49).*

The teachers' choice of instructional emphasis e.g., isolated skills and meaning-based approaches, certainly impacts the educational program. For example, Frederiksen and Collins (1989) discuss the impact that tests of isolated reading skills have on assessment and instructional methods. They note that:

> *"Use of objective tests thus leads to teaching strategies that emphasize the conveying of information and to student learning strategies that emphasize memorization of facts and procedures, rather than learning to generate solutions to problems – including novel problems that occur in "real-life" contexts" (p. 29).*

In many cases, the meaning of reading that instructors embrace is important to the learners' instructional experience also. When Meyer and Keefe (1985) surveyed 106 ABE and 42 GED instructors using the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to the Reading Process (TORP) instrument, they found that "More than twice as many ABE instructors scored in the phonics model range than did the GED instructors." The authors recommend that "ABE and GED instructors must see reading as a meaning making process if they wish their students to obtain maximum results in reading growth" (p. 136).

Perhaps Longfield (1984) sums up the teachers' role best by stating, "... functionally illiterate adults need the warmth and understanding of an enlightened teacher who will set the learner at ease, emphasize the positive, be patient and understanding, and set educational objectives around the students' needs and potential" (p. 9). However, in addition to this, the teacher's instructional methods should reflect the program/learner goals and philosophy of literacy.

In this section, a detailed account of the various approaches to teaching adults was presented. Most authors cited, favored a "reading for meaning" approach to teaching adults that takes advantage of learners' past experiences. Yet, the review also noted programs that combined both phonics and whole-language methods successfully to improve learners' reading skills. The question becomes, How much emphasis is placed on one approach over the other? Perhaps beginning readers can benefit from higher dosages of phonics, whereas more advanced readers can explore the meaning of text. Further, How does phonics and whole-language instruction relate to the development of reading strategies that learners' can use to improve and expand their reading potential? On the other hand, critical thinking and cognitive approaches to teaching adults were presented. Their impact on instruction and assessment was presented. The next section will discuss instructional methods appropriate for learners from language minority populations.

How is Instruction Targeted to Meet the Unique Needs of Language Minority Groups?

As the number of non-English speaking adult learners grows, literacy programs are faced with the challenge of delivering instructional services to this group in order to improve their literacy skills -- but in this case, learners bring two languages to the instructional setting. Finding out how the two languages can be complementary and reinforcing is the challenge for adult literacy programs faced with this situation. By all estimates, this situation will increase over time.

Nationwide, the Hispanic population has increased from 14.6 million to 22.4 million -- or by 53% over the past decade (1990 Census). Since 1980, adult education enrollment has increased 58%, from 2.1 million to more than 3.3 million. Of the three components of adult education programs -- adult basic education (ABE); English as a second language (ESL); and adult secondary education (ASE) -- ESL experienced the largest increase in enrollment, from 19% of the total enrollment in 1980, to 34% in 1989 (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Although much has been written on ESL methodology, Chall, Heron, and Hilferty (1987) suggest that "More information is needed on effective methods of reading instruction for teachers who work with those who are not native speakers of English." (p. 194). Likewise, in a report published by the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult and Literacy (U.S. Department of Education, 1991), four states with high concentrations of Hispanic adults (California, Florida, Texas, and New York), were asked to "...describe their plans to expand and improve the service delivery system for individuals whose native language is not English" (p. 28). The States identified four critical issues: 1) accessibility, 2) assessment, 3) staff development, and 4) *language teaching methodology and curriculum development*. (Emphasis mine.)

The literature suggests that instructional methods should take into consideration learners' native language skills. As Phillips (1984) points out, "Current research in first language reading is applicable to second language reading insofar as the process is concerned. Thus, reading as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (Goodman, Goodman, & Flores, 1979) and as an interactive process between what the reader sees on the page and what is already in the reader's head (Smith, 1982) is as true for the second language reader as for the first language reader."

This section will identify certain teaching methods the literature suggests should be used with ESL adults and also explore the issue of choosing appropriate materials with ESL learners.

However, before moving on to ESL instructional methods, there are at least two facets of the ESL learning experience that research suggests should be considered: 1) ESL learners' background, and 2) ESL learners' reading strategies.

Importance of ESL learners' background. Choosing the proper instructional techniques for ESL learners involves the understanding that the background knowledge the learner brings to the instructional settings is important to both materials and approaches used.

For instance, O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, and Kupper (1987), suggest that even though similarities exist between first and second language reading, unfamiliarity with how the second language works may compromise the learners in their attempt to make accurate guesses about meaning. Further, learners' prior knowledge may not relate to the cultural and linguistic assumptions present in the written text.

Carrell (1984) has noted that schema theory (the interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the text), is a vital factor for ESL comprehension. According to the author, efficient comprehension ... requires the ability to relate the material to one's own background. This point is well taken since it has been reported that adults from different cultural backgrounds interpret the same texts differently (Joag-dev & Steffensen, 1980). The differences in their interpretations are believed to be based on differences in their backgrounds, which have resulted in their gaining different knowledge structures or schema (Gillis, 1983).

In one study (Johnson, 1981), the culture of origin of the student had more effect on comprehension than the level of syntactic or semantic complexity. Similarly, Nelson (1987) found that "Student recall is significantly higher when reading about their own culture, regardless of expressed preference, and students usually prefer articles and stories from their own culture" (p. 425). The author recommends that "there is a need for reading materials related to the culture of the students learning the language" (p. 428). This theme was also highlighted by Obah (1983) who reported that Third World students have educational reading difficulties since "their background experiences reflect a world very different from that portrayed ... in the material that they read" (p. 130).

This background knowledge acts as a reference point for learners to understand text. If learners are familiar with the content, chances are they will understand it better. This concept is not unique to ESL learners, but has been argued as important for native English speaking adults as well (Hirsch, 1983).

Identifying ESL learners' reading strategies. As O'Malley et al. (1987) state, "The identification and application of learning strategies by learners of second language has gained much importance and attention in the conduct of research on second language learning" (p. 1). Like their native English counterparts, ESL learners employ certain strategies, and programs should identify and examine these strategies and possibly incorporate them into their instructional approaches. Supporting this notion, Devine (1983) points out that ESL learners "Do appear to have models of reading which they bring with them to the reading classroom" (p. 13). For instance, the author found that ESL learners not only have models of reading, but "they can clearly distinguish their theoretical orientations as sound centered, word centered, or meaning centered" (p. 13).

There is some evidence that different strategies are used by different ethnic groups. For instance, O'Malley et al. (1987) report in one of their earlier studies (O'Malley, Chamot, Manzanares, Kupper & Russo, 1985) that, "Asian students persisted successfully in using rote repetitive strategies, whereas Hispanic students adopted strategies presented during training [see Table 1] and showed commensurate gains compared to controls" (p. 2). Appleson, Hammerman, and Isaacson (1984) noted that "LEP students were greater risk takers and less embarrassed when making errors. The American born functional illiterate was more concerned with the identification of words, while the second-language student was willing to generate hypothesis about the words and about the meaning of the selections" (p. 14).

The importance of reading strategies is common among languages and once they are learned, they can be transferred to the second language. Unfortunately, learners who develop ineffective learning strategies in their first language can create barriers to second language acquisition. O'Malley et al. (1987) found,

> *Students who view the reading process as a linear word by word decoding activity in their first language ... are not likely to use strategies in second language reading such as processing meaningful chunks rather than individual words, skipping over redundant items, predicting what is to follow, looking back to correct inaccurate predictions, using context to infer meaning of unfamiliar items, and using linguistic markers to identify features of discourse and text organization (p. 10).*

However, if these reading strategies have already been acquired in the first language, it is very possible that they will be very useful in learning the second language and transferred to the second language (Cummins, 1982). Echoing this theme, Appleson et al. (1984) discovered that apparently those students who could read in any language had some advantage initially over the limited or non-reader (p. 29). Thus, teachers may need to make a conscientious attempt to identify appropriate reading strategies in learners' native language that could be utilized to foster second language acquisition.

The importance of the teacher's style and perceptions of reading (cited earlier by Boraks & Schumacher as important to ABRs in English) is important for ESL instruction as well. Some suggest that it is important that the "right" message come across to the ESL learners. Phillips (1984) reports that second language teachers reinforce students' ideas of reading as a word-by-word process when they call for extensive oral reading that focuses on correct pronunciation rather than on comprehension of meaning. This is important since oral grouping strategies are also central to ESL instruction. Crandall et al. (1984) found, for effective programs serving ESL adults that -- although some programs grouped by written language ability -- most programs surveyed grouped by oral language abilities (p. 226).

It has been suggested that effective learners employ a wide repertoire of metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective processing strategies. Research suggests that ESL learners can be taught successful reading strategies. For instance, O'Malley et al. (1987) suggest from their previous research that "When ESL students were trained in the use of selected learning strategies with vocabulary, listening and speaking tasks ... the results indicated that oral proficiency in English and improvements in listening skills were noted." (O'Malley et al. 1985).

O'Malley et al. (1987) divide strategies into two parts; communication strategies and learning strategies. "Communication strategies focus principally on relating or understanding a message as contrasted with learning new information through the second language" (p. 17). Communication strategies include paraphrasing, repeating, emphasizing, and gesturing. These strategies can be employed in either language.

Learning strategies identified by O'Malley et al. (1987) are divided into three categories; 1) metacognitive, 2) cognitive, and 3) social affective. Within each category are listed components which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

ESL Communication and Learning Strategies

Metacognitive	*Cognitive*	*Social Affective*
advanced organization	repetition/imitation	questioning for clarification
organizational planning	rehearsal	cooperation
directed attention	resourcing	self-talk
selective attention	translation	
self-monitoring	grouping	
self-evaluation	notetaking	
self-management	summarizing	
	deduction/induction	
	imagery	
	auditory representation	
	contextualization	
	elaboration	
	transfer	
	inferencing	

SOURCE: O'Malley et al. (1987).

Thus, ESL learner strategies are similar to native English learner strategies in some respects, yet different in others. The differences reflect the varying degrees to which learners are literate in their native language, and the amount and nature of skills they can "borrow" from their native language to support second language acquisition. Further, as O'Malley suggests, questions about the "validity of classifying strategies in terms of those which assist comprehension vs. those which assist retention, or those which are applicable to simple vs. complex tasks needs to be determined" (p. 21).

As with native English speakers, ESL students' backgrounds and reading strategies are important to literacy development. This is especially true of ESL learners who are literate in their native language and have already developed reading strategies that might be transferred to the second language.

With this background information in mind, the next section will address teaching methods for ESL learners.

ESL instructional methods. ESL learners are not a homogeneous group. In fact, non-English speaking adults bring various degrees of literacy in their native language and various degrees of oral fluency in English to the instructional setting (Harman, 1984). Supporting this view, Longfield (1984) states, "An adult ESL class is probably more heterogeneous than a native American ABE class" (p. 18). Providing an example of the range of experiences and knowledge, Crandall et al. (1984) reported one program in their study that assigned those who came to the U.S. with a B.A. degree but no conversational ability in English were put in the "fast track" class while those who had no previous schooling were grouped differently (p. 226). This variety of learners' prior knowledge has consequences for choosing instructional methodologies and materials.

Some researchers have begun to identify the various levels of adult native and second language literacy levels. For instance, Savage (1984) makes the distinction between ESL students who are literate in their native language and those who need literacy training in English. Macias (1988) provides more information on this topic from his analyses of a national data base that found "...of those who were classified as English illiterate, 35% were literate in Spanish (only) ... this means that more than 1 out of 3 persons might be able to use their Spanish literacy to acquire English literacy since they were already literate" (p. 15).

Identifying the various levels of literacy and providing appropriate instruction can involve more work. For example, Longfield (1984) points out that ESL teachers are often expected to teach two subjects at once: ESL and literacy skills to students who may have poor cognitive development. Thus, the questions become, When do we teach English as a Second Language? and, When do we teach English literacy skills? and finally, When do we teach native language literacy? The answer to these questions depends on the program's philosophy of literacy, and their resources – both fiscal and human; and the learner's literacy levels in both first and second languages. Some programs serve only those adult learners who have sufficient English speaking skills (like certain library-based programs) thus, primarily English methods are used; while others in this situation continue to develop native language literacy and gradually introduce English listening and speaking skills once threshold levels of English proficiency are reached.

Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares (1985) provide a valuable framework for conceptualizing an "ESL Instructional Sequence" by listing the stages of language development on a continuum. Although the table was constructed for children as an ESL instructional sequence, it contains crucial concepts of second language learning that can be appropriate for adults. For purposes of this discussion, the table has been slightly modified to represent the holistic LEP instructional sequence – that is, one that includes native language literacy as a precursor to second language literacy.

Table 2

LEP Instructional Sequence[4]

Literacy Proficiency	Native Language Proficiency		English Language Proficiency		
	Low Intermediate (a)	High Intermediate (b)	Beginning (c)	Low Intermediate (d)	High Intermediate & Advanced (e)
Language Objective	Provide initial literacy skills in native language	Develop native language academic skills to some pre-determined threshold level	Social interaction	Initial literacy	Academic language skills
Instructional Approach	Language Experience: Native Language	Cognitive instruction in native language & English listening activities using TPR	Communicative	Language experience	Cognitive\content-based

According to O'Malley and Stewner-Manzanares (1985), in the "beginning" ESL level, social interaction is the goal and communicative activities that enhance the verbal competencies necessary to function at this level are stressed. Initial literacy follows as the next objective where experiences of the learner can be introduced as text or instructional materials. Finally, at the high, intermediate, and advanced stages, academic skills are learned that are embedded in content and cognitive skills related to some curriculum or course of study.

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[4] Table taken from Chamot & Stewner-Manzanares (1985). I slightly changed categories by adding the "native language" column (a & b); also, I included LEP in the title indicating that this is a LEP instructional sequence not totally ESL because of the native language component.

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Introduced into this scheme to broaden its impact on the limited English proficient adult (LEP), is the native language component. In this case, prior or parallel to English instruction, LEP adults receive instruction in their native language to provide a solid base of native language cognitive skills to transfer into the English language. In column (a), low-intermediate, adults are receiving initial literacy skills where LEA approaches would be appropriate, while in column (b), a transfer to learner-authored (i.e., LEA-generated texts) to other texts is recommended that will prepare the adult for the academic rigors of second-language (English) instruction.

Research suggests that building on learners' prior experiences and fluency in their native language will facilitate acquisition of the second language (Cummins, 1982; Krashen, 1982). According to this theory, Common Underlying Proficiencies are present in both languages; so developing proficiencies in native language literacy can help the acquisition of the second language (Cummins, 1982; Krashen, 1982; Thonis, 1982; Swain, 1979). Thus, trying to teach a second language to an adult who needs basic literacy skills can be accommodated by focusing in on their native cognitive skills. Very little research has been conducted in this area. But some studies on adults have uncovered some strong hypothesis that findings in this area could be similar to those for children. For example, a study on adult literacy programs in California noted, "Students who lack literacy in any language clearly have more difficulty in learning to read and write English than do students who are literate in their native tongue" (SRA, 1987, p. 35).

Rivera (1990) points out that "Research evidence suggests that first language literacy promotes second language acquisition, and that literacy skills in the native language are likely to transfer to the second language." She goes on to state:

> *"When adults are taught to read in the language they already know, they can use the linguistic strengths they bring into the program and draw upon the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their first language."*

Results from another study suggested that understanding the learners' native language capabilities can provide insight into their potential capabilities in the second language. In this case, Angus (1986) found a correlation (though mild) between Hispanic Navy recruits' Spanish pre-test scores and greater gains in English. Apparently, ESL recruits' native language literacy skills were predictive of their subsequent gains in English literacy.

If one follows the sequence described in Table 2 above, when learners have achieved a predetermined threshold of literacy in their native language, they can begin English literacy instruction. During this period, English listening and speaking activities are essential. Total Physical Response (TPR) teaching methods can be very helpful during this stage.

Listening has been identified in previous research as an important language activity (Conrad, 1985; Mayer, 1985), and is considered central to second language acquisition (Asher, 1982; Gary & Gary, 1981), especially at the beginning stages of ESL. Effective teaching methodologies that focus on listening at the beginning level of second language study include the Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR (Asher, 1982) is based on the premise that listening comprehension should precede speaking the second language. In fact, listening comprehension skills can be of a higher order (not just recall of facts) than those that can be actually expressed by the learner. Yet merely waiting for the learner to "produce" output before moving on to higher-order activities may actually delay their cognitive development in the second language. Teachers must facilitate the listening stage with content-related activities based on modifications of the spoken word.

Research suggests that teachers can facilitate the listening process in several ways. For example, Hatch (1979) suggests that second language comprehension can be fostered by, 1) slower rate and clear articulation, which helps learners to identify word boundaries more easily, and allows more processing time, 2) more use of high frequency vocabulary, less slang, fewer idioms, and 3) syntactic simplification and shorter sentences. Providing such "comprehensible input" in "low anxiety situations" (Krashen, 1982) improves the learners chances for acquiring the second language. Savage adds practices such as "longer pauses at natural breaks, ... and exaggerated intonation accompanied by appropriate body language and movement" as important modifications of speech in ESL lessons.

Organizing speaking instruction based on ESL students' learning characteristics can be very productive. For instance, Krashen suggests that ESL students either "learn" or "acquire" the second language. Students who "learn" the language pay special attention to the structure of the language and the accuracy of pronunciation and grammar. Students who "acquire" language, do so naturally, through listening comprehension methods and prompts given by the teacher in "low-anxiety" situations. Given this situation, teaching strategies that take advantage of these learning styles can get the most out of learners' strengths to produce greater results.

Alamprese et al. (1988) identify seven speaking techniques that are related either to language "learners" or language "acquirers." For language acquirers, the authors identified teaching techniques such as the following: 1) early production, 2) role playing, and 3) language generating. For language learners the teaching techniques include: 1) drills, and 2) dialogue. Techniques useful for both types of learners are pair-practice and information gap techniques (pp. 13-15).

Teaching LEP adults initial literacy skills can be accommodated nicely by use of the language experience approach (LEA). Using the learners' experiences as the basis for instruction and material development, learners work with familiar themes and text (that they themselves generate) to achieve reading and writing skills. Research has shown that this approach has been successful and popular with LEP adults (Simich-Dudgeon, 1989; Dixon & Nessel, 1983; Solórzano, 1991; Wrigley & Guth, in press).

As LEP adults make the transition from learner-authored text to other or commercially developed texts, their ESL instruction should be broadened to represent various content areas and associated cognitive skills and strategies. As reported in the previous section, research suggests that an emphasis placed on teaching ESL learners appropriate reading strategies will produce positive results. As Devine (1983) concluded after examining adult ESL internalized models of the reading process, "... a further relationship can be found between the internalized model of reading and the success of the reader in comprehending text material" (p. 13). The author suggests that a meaning-centered approach to reading seems to predict more successful comprehension than a word-centered or (especially) a sound-centered approach. Instructors might give thought as to how they can assist students in adopting reading strategies that could be called meaning-centered. The author points out that "the language experience approach seems particularly fruitful in encouraging L2 reading students to focus primary attention on meaning in written text" (p. 13).

Some suggest different strategies for different levels of native language literacy. For example, a review of teaching strategies for ESL adults was conducted by Savage (1984). She proposes three teaching strategies related to the following categories:

1. synthetic (focus on patterns),
2. analytic (focus on meaning), and
3. pre-reading.

For learners at the "pre-reading" stage, Savage suggests introducing the concept that things can be symbolized through writing. "Activities begin by working with real objects, then linking real objects to pictures" (p. 6).

Another objective of pre-reading activities is to develop visual discrimination skills. Savage (1984) lists a number of commercial texts that contain these pre-reading activities. Another perspective on pre-reading skills is suggested by Nelson (1987) for passages that "fit the reader's schema and when it does not" (p. 428). These pre-reading activities are crucial in that they develop the learner's background experiences -- experiences to which they can refer to when reading subsequent text.

Pearson-Casanave (1984) divides pre-reading activities into two categories 1) those derived directly from the reading text, such as discussing the title, illustrations, headings, and charts, plus scanning and skimming, and 2) those that are external to the text. External preparation can be noncommunicative, such as using slides, videos, films, pictures, lectures, and field trips, or communicative, such as using student pairs, small groups, class discussions, and outside contacts" (quoted in Nelson 1987, p. 428). These pre-reading activities are important because they build background knowledge, thus enabling learners to predict as they read (Goodman, 1967), thereby helping them becoming better readers and comprehending more (Nelson, 1987).

With regard to Savage's analytic stage, she suggests that for the ESL learner who has learned the concept that "things can be symbolized through writing ... activities which focus on meaning are effective." She notes, " ... the context arises from interest, personal experiences or need...In ESL literacy instruction, strategies which focus on meaning are used at the word level, at the phrase and sentence level, and beyond the sentence level" (p. 8).

Many authors have focused in on what Savage refers to as the "meaning" component of ESL instruction. Yet the need for meaningful reading materials related to the culture of the students learning the language is still lacking (Nelson, 1987). To compensate for this lack of resources, Nelson suggests the use of the language experience approach, using thematic units about topics familiar to learners, then branching out to other non-familiar topics.

Finally, at the synthetic level, Savage suggests the use of patterns presented through phonics, through a carefully controlled and sequenced presentation of syllables or structures, and through the grouping of letters and numbers to teach writing (p. 19). Using teaching techniques (such as identifying the first letter/sound of a word), commonly used for native language instruction is fine; however, there is still the need to incorporate words/vocabulary relevant to the adult learner.

The importance of the relationship between word context and prior experiences dealing with the words has been underscored in other research. Perkins and Brutten (1983) report that the importance of context and word recognition seem to be the same for L1 and L2 readers. They point out that "It seems that the context of words, their frequency and the quality of their context is important to the L2 student's understanding of the word and sentence. The implications are that the 'vocabulary' and grammar encountered [by ESL learners] should have already been learnt save for the gradual introduction of a few novel vocabulary items." (p. 127). The notion that ESL instruction should proceed with what learners already know plus a little more is also suggested by Krashen (1982). He argues in his i+1 theory that learners' previous knowledge (i) needs to be the basis for instruction and then additional pieces of information (1) need to be added to this base of prior knowledge in a "comprehensible input format."

The frequency of the word and the "richness" of its context is very important to comprehension. Perkins and Brutten (1983) note that if CLOZE passages (recommended by others as effective teaching techniques: Longfield, 1984; Savage, 1984) are to be used for practice, prediction, and word guessing, such experiences should be sequenced from high frequency-rich context in the beginning passages to low frequency-poor context (if ever) in the more advanced materials" (p. 127). According to the authors, the question as to whether a word is high frequency depends on the learners' background.

Other successful strategies identified in ESL instruction include role playing and the use of realia in the classroom (Crandall et al. 1984; Asher, 1982). The Crandall study found that topics that "got the students going" were often those related to the students' previous experiences (p. 226)." Similar findings regarding the positive effects of role playing and language experience approaches were found for native adult English speakers as well (Crutchfield, 1981).

Appleson et al. (1984), reported on an adult literacy program that provided instruction for both native English speakers and non-English speakers. They found that having native English speakers to model for ESL students could be beneficial, suggesting that "Contact with native speakers did facilitate the learning process for the limited English proficient (LEP) student. Second language learners needed to vocalize what they read by re-telling, discussing vocabulary, analyzing humor and evaluating syntax" (p. 17). The program used the following three stages of reading as part of the instructional program:

1. introduction (introducing the idea of reading as understanding the written form of someone's speech),
2. immersion (exposing the learner to all types of print), and
3. independence (learner chooses which materials and stories to read).

From these stages, the following effective teaching strategies were identified. For the *Introduction* stage the program used the language experience approach; for the *Immersion* stage they used group activities, pairing/peer teaching, assisted reading (where some pairing was done with a foreign born and native speaker); and for the *Independent* stage they used a variety of materials such as those which were commercially developed, newspapers, individualized reading materials, etc. The program also reported using games, sustained silent reading, and the use of taped stories with the learners.

The use of models is implicitly supported in other research where pairing of foreign born students with native speakers or former program students was found to be successful. In this instance, Phillips et al. (1985) analyzed 400 effective adult literacy programs and found that peer support was a strong feature of the ESL programs. The authors found that, "The ESL sites and other programs reported that people were more willing to participate and remain in the program when they were matched with tutors of the same ethnic and/or class background" (p. 16).

Other research supports this finding and suggests that minorities show high attrition rates partly because their middle and upper-class White tutors fail to understand or empathize with the different cultures, values, and pressures experienced by minority students (Darkenwald, 1975).

Savage describes successful ESL strategies as developing sight word vocabulary, making word associations, matching pictures and words and arranging words to form sentences, to name a few activities (p. 14). She does warn, however, that in addition to the above approaches "instruction must also include activities which focus on meaning beyond the sentence level (p. 14). She recommends TPR, the sequencing of pictures or sentences to form paragraphs, the language experience approach, and the use of Cloze exercises since the object of Cloze is to develop the students' ability to predict, to get meaning from context, and to focus on the whole passage rather than on isolated segments.

In sum, research has shown that developing literacy skills in the learners' native language will facilitate transference of literacy skills to the second language (Cummins, 1982). For many adult literacy programs, providing basic literacy skills in the native language will go a long way towards helping the learner acquire the second language (Rivera, 1990; Wrigley & Guth, in press). The basic concept is to build on learners' strengths, not weaknesses. However, similar to the K-12 educational arena, politics may play a role in whether programs approach literacy in this fashion. For instance, while realizing the advantages of developing native language literacy to promote second language literacy, Longfield notes, "It would be politically unsavory to fund bilingual education for adults when bilingual education for children is already so severely criticized" (p. 12). This position, however, acquiesces to the political pressures of not providing limited-English proficient (LEP) adults the best educationally sound instructional program, but providing a politically correct one instead.

With the number of limited-English proficient (LEP) adults enrolling in adult education classes increasing, along with the need for them to learn English (e.g., Amnesty), identifying their native language literacy strengths to facilitate English acquisition could be the most beneficial and efficient educational strategy for adults in their pursuit of literacy in both languages.

Suggestions for teaching ESL learners were presented in this section. The fact that ESL learners are not a homogeneous group -- culturally or linguistically -- was noted. Learners come from different backgrounds and with varying degrees of literacy development in their native language. The challenge is to identify the learners' strengths and build an instructional strategy around those strengths. Teaching methods that incorporate ESL adults' background experiences and previously learned literacy strategies are -- in effect -- maximizing the learners' potential to acquire a second language. Although -- as the literature suggests -- materials may not be adequate for this population, the use of the language experience approach (especially for beginning readers) was recommended as a viable alternative. In this case, however, it is important to remember that subsequent activities which continue to build and develop cognitive skills relating to various content areas should be provided.

Materials

Research suggests that effective programs "Build a curriculum that reflects the students' goals, interests, and needs, and incorporates the program mission." Yet building the curriculum in this fashion is only part of the process. A recent unpublished report by the U.S. Department of Education (1988) recommends that programs need to continually monitor the appropriateness of their curriculum. The report's authors note, "Program staff and students in an effective literacy program work together to design, revise, and modify the curriculum so that it stays interesting and responsive to the students' goals and the program context."

Much of the decision related to instructional materials reflects the program's philosophy of adult literacy. For instance, Phillips et al. (1985) report that "Program philosophies heavily influence the use of teaching materials, just as the same philosophies had determined attitudes toward testing and diagnosis." The authors uncovered various types of programs and found that the skills-oriented programs tended to use commercially-developed, prescriptive curricula keyed toward helping students attain particular competencies, whereas the programs emphasizing empowerment varied their use of materials and methods according to the student population being served.

The difference in materials use by type of service provider was discovered in other studies as well. For example, in a study of California's literacy providers, SRA (1987) reported that educational institutions (adult schools and community colleges) used a wide variety of instructional materials, whereas community-based organizations and library-based literacy programs use Laubach Way to Reading materials published by New Readers Press. Other research conducted with library-based adult literacy programs has uncovered this trend as well (Wurzbacher & Yeannakis, 1986; Lane, McGuire, Yeannakis & Wurzbacher, 1984; Solórzano & Stecher, 1987). Interestingly, however, many of these programs also use a variety of learning materials to supplement the Laubach skill books.

Much of the problem in teaching adults to read is finding appropriate and interesting materials. There is great concern that reading materials used to teach adults are neither interesting nor appropriate. As Brown and Newman (1970) point out, "One of the most significant findings in much of the research reveals the importance of using meaningful subject matter in teaching the beginning adult reader" (p. 20). Early adult literacy programs used materials created for children because it was assumed that there was little difference between adult learning and learning by children (Cass, 1971; Cook, 1977). Kazemek (1988) observes that "Commercial materials that are widely used with adults -- for example, many of the workbooks published by New Readers Press and Steck-Vaughn -- are often indistinguishable in form and content from those used in elementary school classrooms" (p. 465). Supporting this viewpoint, Chall et al. (1987) note that successful literacy programs stress the importance of practice as it relates to increasing learners' reading levels, yet they point out that learners "... must practice reading interesting and readable materials, which unfortunately, may not be available commercially" (p. 195).

The problem of selecting appropriate materials for adults is especially difficult since one needs to identify high interest and low reading level materials. However, research suggests that if materials are used that are of high interest to adults, positive results may occur. For instance, Hutchinson (1978) found that the experimental group performed better than the control group after receiving instruction with individualized teacher-made selections based on the stated interests of learners. The control group used commercially prepared workbooks and kits.

Therefore, guidance in the area of material selection and dissemination is an important consideration in adult literacy programs. According to Kazemek (1988) "One of our pressing responsibilities is to help program directors, teachers, and tutors begin to reconsider their instructional materials and methods. We must learn to go beyond the controlled texts and tightly sequenced skills approaches which most often make reading and writing harder instead of easier -- texts and approaches with which many adult students have already experienced failure" (p. 482). Although this is a challenge, the literature continually suggests that programs should choose relevant learner-focused materials (Mayer, 1985; U.S. Department of Education, 1988). The U.S. Department of Education's Report on adult literacy programs recommends that "Teaching materials should look and read like normal adult reading materials, for example, paperback novels, newspapers, and manuals that don't announce their reading levels on the cover. Real-life materials should be used whenever possible" (p. 43).

The use of real-life materials is especially important with rural students. Hone (1984) points out after surveying 54 rural exemplary programs that curriculum is actively shaped by employment possibilities, social or political issues in an area, students' prior experiences, and what they will find useful" (p. 15).

Another problem in choosing adult learner materials is determining the appropriate reading level of the books. Determining the reading level is not only difficult, but can actually be the cause of the lack of student progress (Rogers, 1987). In examining reading series used by volunteer groups, the author found that "problems with inconsistent levels of difficulty would seem to be pervasive in this market" (p. 27). The inconsistent levels of difficulty with the materials used could -- in the author's opinion -- "easily discourage tutors and students by means of apparent failures" (p. 27). The problem is that different models are used to estimate "readability indices." As a result, "...the information is of limited utility to someone like a tutor who might wish to compare the relative difficulties of two different [reading] series" (p. 27). The author recommends that publishers should "stipulate any presumed entry skills required of students who might be given these textbooks" (p. 27).

This opinion is similar to that of Crandall et al. (1984), who acknowledge the "... readability level of commercial material to be a problem" (p. 216). Yet, on the other hand, the authors present a paradox. They quote an ABE director in their sample who states, "My assumption and experience has been that they want to read the same things that I do .." In this case, perhaps high- interest relevant materials for adults may be too difficult for them to read. Yet the learner motivational factor may outweigh the "logistical" reasons for selecting low-level reading materials.

After selecting appropriate materials, matching the curriculum to adults' needs and the reading process is yet another challenge for literacy programs. Knowles (1978) states that the andragogical model requires a process-oriented curriculum rather than the usual content-oriented plan. According to the author, the process includes the following:

1. establishing a climate that is conducive to learning,
2. creating a mechanism that allows for mutual planning of both content and procedures in instruction,
3. diagnosing the needs,
4. determining content in the form of program or course objectives,
5. planning the actual learning experiences, including sequencing them appropriately,
6. conducting the learning procedures -- teaching the class, and
7. evaluating outcomes in relation to the originally stated needs.

Knowles recommends that these processes be conducted as a joint venture between the teacher and learner.

The literature also strongly recommends that programs contain enough supplemental reading materials for learners so as to reflect their changing interests and goals and also to encourage them to practice reading. Boraks and Richardson (1981) suggest that "Adults in mid-life and beyond may find task-oriented reading materials will not be enough ... adults do often change their interests and goals direction as they become older and as they read more proficiently" (p. 5). As a result, the authors recommend that a choice of materials be made available for the adults. This finding is similar to that of Balmuth (1987). She points out that "It is necessary to have available an assortment of materials supplementary to the materials of the central system, since students vary in their reading interests as well as in the amount of practice they require" (p. 19).

Supplemental materials can also expand and broaden the learners' knowledge and desire to read more. When Brown and Newman (1970) surveyed 207 ABE students, they found it "... necessary and desirable to develop considerable supplementary material both from an interest standpoint and from the need of extending the materials horizontally for the slower members in the group" (p. 35). Pasch and Oakley (1985) asked their learners to recommend changes for program improvement and the two highest responses were "more interesting materials and more advanced materials" (p. 11).

The careful selection and use of supplementary materials can also positively affect program retention rates. Stauffer (1973) found that "tutors who used supplemental teaching materials with their students had 18.4% fewer dropouts" (p. 72). Hutchinson (1978) also found that learners who used teacher-made material based on their own interests attended more hours of class. Therefore, supplemental materials can be a powerful resource in improving literacy and reducing the dropout rate of adults in literacy programs.

As this section points out, materials reflect the program's philosophy of literacy and their instructional focus. Yet, as this review recommends, materials should also relate to learners' goals. The literature suggests that care be taken in choosing materials to insure that they are visually suitable and that the subject matter is relevant to the learner. Also, most of the authors in this section would recommend that a variety of supplemental materials be made available to the learners so they can explore other texts and interests as their reading improves.

What Materials do Programs Use for Learners Who are Low-literate in Their Native Language and English?

Finding adequate materials for learners who are illiterate in their native and second language is indeed difficult. As Longfield (1984) notes, "While there is an ample market of ESL materials for adults, most assume that the adult is literate and will transfer literacy skills to the second language. Few materials are available for teaching literacy skills to the limited English Proficient speaker" (pp. 18-19). Savage verifies this dilemma by stating that "The use of textbooks is one of the major differences between an ESL literacy class and an 'ordinary' ESL class. For literate ESL students, textbooks are an aid to memory. For the nonliterate, traditional texts have been one more obstacle to overcoming the problem of learning English" (p. 31).

Further, the understanding of the ESL/Literacy distinction has repercussions for materials selection and teaching ESL learners. Again, as Longfield observes, "...most ESL materials introduce reading and writing exercises as a reinforcement to the listening and speaking skills ... " She also observes that "... this technique is particularly successful with students who are literate in their own language and who transfer word attack skills from their language to English..." (p. 25). However, she points out that reading and writing activities are important for the learner needing basic literacy skills as well. She concludes, "... to totally shift away from concentration on paper and pencil, book-oriented activities to strictly oral conversations and pattern drills is the fulfillment of only half of our responsibilities" (p. 25).

Thus, programs must be aware of the developmental stages of the learner and apply appropriate teaching methods and materials. Table 2 (Chamot & Stewner-Manzanares, 1985) presented a continuum of LEP adult literacy stages. The "low-intermediate native language group" was in need of initial literacy instruction in the native language coupled with appropriate materials or LEA-generated materials.

For this group of learners, materials that are in many cases not tied to commercial curriculum seem to work best. That is, the curriculum is either locally developed or totally learner centered. For instance, Longfield (1984) recounts that since the prevailing theory had been that one did not teach such persons literacy skills until their listening and speaking skills were proficient, most programs did not pay much attention to reading and writing in the ESL classroom. Thus, she states, "The real problem is the lack of materials designed for persons just learning to speak the language who are at the zero level in reading and writing skills" (p. 23). Therefore, "materials" she suggests for this group are tied to teaching strategies such as the following:

1) language experience approach,
2) strip stories,
3) one-word approach,
4) Cloze techniques,
5) snap reading, and
6) adaptation of materials
(simplifying language but not concepts).

The language experience approach is particularly attractive for LEP adults since it initially solves the problem of identifying relevant instructional materials. The language experience approach does not use commercially developed materials as the centerpiece of instruction. Materials are generated from the stories/experiences of the adults. The approach has been found to be useful and effective for LEP populations needing literacy instruction in either their native or second language (Solórzano, 1991; Dixon & Nessel, 1983; Simich-Dudgeon, 1989; Wrigley & Guth, in press).

Finally, some suggest that materials for low literate LEP adults may not be that important of an issue -- that listening plays an important role in the early stages of second language development. Based on this argument, the natural approach to English acquisition would be more appropriate than traditional grammar-based ESL approaches. In this case, less emphasis is placed on "materials" as such -- they do not "drive" the curriculum. More emphasis is placed on listening comprehension. The method e.g., Total Physical Response, Sheltered English, is stressed while teachers can use locally developed materials to elicit responses from the learners. Lessons do not necessarily need to be grammatical or audio-lingual in nature (Terrell, 1982). This, in fact, is the basis for the language experience approach discussed earlier in this section.

Developing the listening and prior content-based knowledge of the learner is essential. In some cases, programs use phonics-based materials to provide background experiences. Savage suggests three commercially developed sets of materials which provide prior aural/oral exercises for adults with vocabulary in context that prepare them for the subsequent phonics exercises. They are: Longfield (1981) *Passage to ESL Literacy: Student Workbook*; Haverson and Haynes (1980) *Modulearn ESL Literacy*

Program: Learner Workbook; and Bassano (1980), Consonants Sound Easy and Sounds Easy.

In sum, it is crucial to distinguish between LEP adults' literacy levels both in their native and second language before offering instructional interventions. It would seem that adults reaching a predetermined threshold of native language literacy might be ready for content-based materials in English. In this case, an ESL content-based approach that uses materials from various curriculum areas can be successful. For adults not reaching pre-determined threshold literacy levels, and in the absence of appropriate commercially developed materials, programs might try developing their own materials tailored to the needs and goals of their learners, or use the language experience approach (LEA) – which emphasizes learner-authored (or dictated) writings. Later, LEA learners can transfer to content-based approaches where materials are adapted by simplifying language and teaching techniques, but not concepts.

What Materials do Programs Use for Learners Who are Literate in Their Native Language and Low-literate in English?

This group represents those adults who have learned (to various degrees) many literacy-related cognitive skills in their native language. In this sense, they have various levels of literacy in their native language, but cannot speak, read or write in English. In essence, these adults are represented under column (b) in Table 2. The point is, these learners can use their current cognitive skills to learn the second language (i.e., English). Therefore, ESL materials should be tailored to their "literacy" level (in this case native language literacy level), since they are not illiterate. However, relevant materials for this population are hard to find. Some programs have turned to the Mexican Consulate for Spanish materials.[5]

From a general perspective, an important consideration of ESL material selection (no matter what levels of native language literacy) centers around their relevancy as it relates to the background experiences of the ESL learner. Unfortunately, most ESL textbooks contain selections that students know little about, especially students from non-Western cultures. For instance, as noted earlier, the ESL learners' background experiences correlate to their subsequent comprehension in the second language (Nelson, 1987). Yet, in many cases, materials used in adult literacy programs do not reflect the background experiences of the ESL learner. In fact, as Nelson (1987) points out, "An analysis of ESL textbooks reveals a propensity for passages from British and American literature, American and British newspaper articles, short biographies of famous Americans, and numerous articles on aspects of American culture such as racial issues, old age, retirement, and food."

In addition to relevant materials, however, is the nature of the activities emphasized by ESL textbooks. That is, many texts emphasize phonics or grammar-based approaches which in many cases do not teach higher-order skills and do not take advantage of LEP adults' native language literacy capabilities and/or potential to learn a second language. It was mentioned earlier that cognitive skills learned in the native language can be transferred to the second language (Rivera, 1988; Cummins, 1982). This being the case, why would instruction focus on lower-ordered discrete skills when an ESL learner may be at higher cognitive levels in their native language? This *instructional mismatch* could impede progress and lead to high dropout rates as well.

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[5] In Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) adult basic education program and the Basic Adult Spanish Education (BASE) programs have used materials from this source.

Thus, appropriate and relevant materials that prepare ESL adults in literacy activities at various levels are an important component of the instructional delivery system for this learner population. Yet, generally, most programs do not make this distinction. If programs determine learners are "literate" in their native language, they are taught exclusively with English materials. If they are illiterate in their native language, they are taught using oral repetition activities until they can begin to produce speech in English -- then they are taught using English materials.

For those literate in their native language, as mentioned earlier, a content-based approach would be appropriate and cognitively challenging. Materials would come from various curriculum areas, and instruction would be "sheltered" to allow the second language learner to understand the meaning of the lesson, and not lose cognitive development in the process.

It is important to remember that content can be used to teach ESL learners -- especially if they are literate in their native language. Although they can not read in English, they have broad life experiences in their native language, and these experiences can be transferred into English lessons using a content-based approach. Further, cognitive literacy skills learned in their native language can bridge understanding to similar cognitive demands in the second language.

Some proponents of this approach suggest that, "Rather than organizing the lesson around language items like sentence patterns or around language skills like reading and writing, the teacher chooses a theme or topic appropriate to the class and uses this content information for integrated work with language skills and language items." According to the author, this approach is different from the language experience approach since "...there is a systematic plan for integrating language learning with mastering the content" (Mohan, 1988, p. 8).

Earlier, the suggestion was made that materials should be adapted (perhaps by simplifying language) to assist the second language learner, but that the "concepts" embedded in the text be left intact. This is a very important point in second language instruction and material selection for ESL learners literate in their native language. There is a question as to whether ESL learners have cognitive or linguistic deficits which hinder or help second language acquisition. DeAvila (1984) suggests that bilinguals have language, not cognitive, deficits and that the cognitive skills that students have should be further strengthened through instruction that includes activities of higher-order cognitive demand. DeAvila suggests that most classroom practice focuses on rote learning of facts and not on complex forms of information processing so that the cognition advantages of bilingual students are seldom seen or exercised.

Developing meaningful materials for ESL learners literate in their native language is essential. These learners know what reading entails, yet they need assistance in transferring these skills in order to speak and eventually read and write English. As Longfield (1984) explains, "...concentration on language drills and grammar exercises which, by their very nature, are out of context and contain no important message to be conveyed to learners should be avoided. What we want is to teach the language, not to teach about the language" (p. 23).

How Are Materials Selected?

Phillips et al. (1985), suggest that program philosophy influences the selection of materials. They point out that skills-oriented programs tend to use commercially-developed prescriptive curricula keyed toward helping students attain particular competencies, whereas programs emphasizing empowerment varied their use of materials according to the student population being served. In the latter case, the authors found that "teachers systematically developed materials utilizing student input and also encouraged students to bring up subjects that concerned them for classroom discussion" (p. 23).

If the program had a language-based philosophy of reading, and used a language experience approach to teaching reading and writing, the materials would actually come from the students themselves -- based on their experiences. If the program philosophy emphasized life-skills, then real-life materials linked to learners' lives would be used. Many agree with this philosophy and feel that materials should be selected based on the learners' needs and interests. Valentine (1985) even suggests that materials should be derived from an analysis of the learners' daily environment -- workplace, home, and community.

Newman and Eyster (1981), under the auspices of the International Reading Association's Basic Education and Reading (BEAR) committee, developed an evaluation checklist to be used when reviewing adult materials. The authors developed this checklist with the input from various adult literacy program providers at various conferences with the hopes that "...it will be helpful to adult educators, administrators, volunteer tutors, librarians, and others -- in fact, anyone who must select reading materials for adult learners" (p. 701). From this extensive review process, the authors identified 10 criteria, along with sub-questions for each heading, to rate adult literacy materials. The criteria are detailed below with abbreviated versions of the sub-questions in parenthesis:

* appeal (fresh, enjoyable, interesting),
* relevance (depicts adult life experiences),
* purpose (states broad goals or specific objectives),
* process (prereading experiences, word analysis, comprehension),
* human relations (depicts ethnic/racial gender in positive way),
* evaluation (provides pre- and post-test, and monitoring),
* function of material (encourages wide reading, suggests resources, contains answer keys),
* format (appear attractive, suitable illustrations),
* teacher directions (instructions offered to both teacher/student), and
* content (selections short enough to hold interest, appropriate reading level, promotes comprehension, writing activities).

The authors included a quantitative formula and related scale to evaluate the material's usability with particular students.

Information from the previous sections indicates that material selection is a function of program philosophy and goals. Although problems surrounding the availability of quality materials for adults -- both native English and second language learners -- still exist, the research recommends that materials be selected (or locally developed) with the learners' goals in mind. This will not only enhance the learners' chances for improving their literacy skills, but for staying in the program as well.

Directly related to teaching methods and instructional materials is learner assessment. The next section addresses this important issue.

II. TESTING AND EVALUATION

A program's choice of testing instruments -- like the choice of materials -- is related to program goals and, to some extent, definitions of literacy (Crandall et al., 1984; Johnson, 1985). The authors found three patterns of test use categorized by literacy sectors. Thus, local ABE's, community-based organizations, corrections, and postsecondary programs depended heavily on standardized tests such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), Botell Reading Inventory, and the Stanford and California Reading Tests. Echoing this finding are Lytle, Mormor, & Penner, (1986), who point out that the TABE and the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) are often cited as the two assessment instruments most frequently used in adult literacy programs (p. 13).

The second pattern of test use noted by Crandall et al. (1984), relates to military programs which combine standardized tests (TABE, WRAT, CAT, and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) to measure literacy skills and non-standardized measures (criterion-referenced tests) to diagnose specific skills as they relate to military tasks (p. 159).

Finally, the third pattern of test use uncovered by Crandall reflects the employment and training programs surveyed. As the authors note, "... emphasis is not on a generalized improvement of skills, but on developing specific skills which enable clients to get and keep jobs" (p. 160). Although these patterns were identified, the authors caution that, for instance, 30-40 percent of the ABE and community-based programs also used criterion-referenced instruments and still others (especially in California), used the CASAS competency-based assessment system.

On this same note, Phillips et al. (1985), analyzed 15 adult literacy programs and found that the use of test materials fell into the following three categories:

1. jobs-oriented programs,
2. human development programs, and
3. programs with empowerment philosophies.

The authors state, "In jobs-oriented programs, teachers utilized standardized testing materials to assess and diagnose student's progress and choose teaching methodologies. In these programs, students had little or no involvement in their own placement or in the development of their educational goals" (p. 22).

Programs that focused on human development considered testing less important. "Testing was primarily used for placement testing, to document progress for funding purposes, or for diagnosing instructional needs. In the latter case, testing procedures were adapted to meet the individual student's needs for particular kinds of information.

For programs stressing empowerment philosophies, testing was not considered important by directors or teachers, although it was used for placement for collecting statistics that funding sources required" (p. 22).

More and more community-based organizations and library-based literacy programs are experimenting with non-standardized measures for evaluating learner progress. For instance, in the California Literacy Campaign, the California State Library has instituted the California Adult Learner Progress Evaluation Procedure (CALPEP), that focuses on changes in learners' literacy habits, learners' perceptions of reading and writing progress, and goal-attainment as measures of progress (Solórzano, 1991). In the latter case, literacy progress is related to materials relevant to the learner. This idea is gaining popularity with programs emphasizing learner-centered instruction. For example, Sticht (1990) points out that for instructional purposes, adults choosing to read and study a technical manual should be assessed with alternative methods. He states, "... an alternative assessment method is needed, perhaps one in which learners' needs are determined by interviews that include trial readings of technical manual passages. Then, progress checks using reading aloud and question/discussion periods for checking comprehension might be used to indicate learning in the program" (p. 28).

Other studies have observed a similar trend of libraries and CBO's using informal learner progress evaluation methods as well. For example, in a study of California's adult literacy delivery system, SRA (1987) found that "Adult schools and community colleges tended to rely on standardized competency-based assessment instruments, while libraries and community-based organizations were more likely to use a variety of formal and informal assessment methods" (p. 82).

Concerns regarding the appropriateness of tests for measuring adult learners have been raised. Kazemek (1988) observes that "... some of the diagnostic tests commonly used with adults -- for example, the Slosson Oral Reading Test ... were developed for children, not adults" (p. 465). Along this same line, Lytle et al. (1986) point out that the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) "... is the California Test of Basic Skills rewritten in adult language" (p. 13). Greenleigh Associates reported during their study in 1966 that "The achievement and intelligence tests used in this field test lacked reliability and validity for this adult population. These were neither geared to the knowledge base of the students nor standardized with this population" (Quoted in Brown & Newman, 1970).

In general, although literacy programs use a variety of tests -- both standard and informal -- few are pleased with the utility of such tests.

One of the more informative discussions of test use in adult literacy programs is contained in the study by Crandall et al. (1984). They discovered that all of the programs in their national survey used some form of test...as a matter of fact "Almost one-third of the 225 programs queried rank diagnosis as the most important component in their program" (pp. 3-48). Reporting similar findings, Phillips et al. (1985) also concluded that "All fifteen programs in the study were involved in some form of assessment and diagnosis ..."

Solórzano and Stecher (1987) found that of 45 California Literacy Campaign program coordinators surveyed regarding learner assessment procedures, most reported that they assessed oral reading upon entry into the program, while the second most common area was sight vocabulary followed by decoding skills, phonics and comprehension. However, post assessments were conducted only about 50% of the time.

In a study of adult schools, community colleges, library-based literacy programs and community-based programs in California, SRA (1987) found that certain trends among these service delivery areas regarding test use were apparent, although "Few programs engaged in formal pre-post testing for adult literacy students" (p. 84).

Even though post-test data are in many cases unavailable, pretest data do serve an important function -- especially if administered by qualified personnel. Most programs conduct some form of initial diagnosis of learners upon entry into the program. Equating early diagnosis with the efficient use of time, Havrilesky suggests that this form of testing is a key factor in successful programs (Quoted in Balmuth 1987, p. 12). Furthermore, Balmuth (1987) stresses that the initial diagnosis of learners' needs should be conducted and "... by someone skilled in reading diagnosis" (p. 13).

Concurring with this viewpoint, Greenleigh Associates (1969) found in their study of adult basic education programs in New Jersey, that the lack of an academic background of instructional staff to be able to diagnose the kinds of difficulties students were having put instructional staff at a disadvantage.

How is Learner Performance Monitored?

Monitoring learner progress is an important activity of adult literacy programs. As the U.S. Department of Education observes, "Adult literacy students are usually as eager as their teachers to find out how they are doing. Effective programs give progress reports to and share test results with students" (p. 49). Thus, the authors recommend that programs regularly assess the students' progress and let them know, in an encouraging way, how they are doing.

In most cases where standardized tests are used to monitor progress, programs re-administer the test to learners after a specified number of hours of instruction. These "post-tests" usually are administered at 50 or 100 hour intervals. Their utility is questionable, however, since usually such tests have little or no relationship to the curriculum used. That is, there is a mismatch between the purpose of assessment and instructional goals.

In other instances, learners' performance is monitored by their progress through the program's selected workbooks or texts. For instance, Laubach Way to Reading materials (popular with many CBO's and library-based literacy programs), have built-in "check-ups" after each book that monitors learner progress. Many commercially developed materials also have end-of-the-unit tests that monitor learners' progress.

Solórzano and Stecher (1987) found, when reviewing the progress monitoring procedures of 45 library-based adult literacy programs, that "A vast majority of the CLC coordinators indicated that regular monitoring took place in the following skill areas: comprehension, decoding, oral reading, sight vocabulary and phonics. Half of these coordinators mentioned using the Laubach Way to Reading "check-ups" as a method of monitoring adult learner progress" (p. 14). Other informal methods such as interviews, observations, and materials such as Merrill Linguistics, Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) and San Diego Quick Assessment (SDQA) were used to varying degrees. The authors found that writing and mathematics progress was monitored less frequently.

Programs using competency-based instructional systems monitor learner progress on a regular basis. In California, for example, programs using the CASAS system can monitor learner progress by following the steps outlined in the CBAE Assessment System which includes:

* developing individual student profiles,
* establishing a placement process that includes assessment of both basic and life skills and focuses on student goals and needs,
* establishing a system for monitoring student and group progress, including a record keeping system, and
* establishing criteria and implementing assessment procedures for

student movement to the next level or for certification upon exiting the program.

A recent assessment developed for adults is the Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS). Developed as a result of the ETS Young Adult Literacy Survey (YALS, 1986), this test measures literacy from three perspectives: prose, document, and quantitative. Using open-ended "real-life" materials, learner performance is based on scores on three separate scales. Integral to this assessment is the assessment of underlying cognitive competencies associated with each item from each scale. Although instructional materials are just beginning to be developed, initial field tests of this concept have been encouraging.

How are Programs Evaluated?

What is Evaluation? Evaluation is an important component to program operations. For adult literacy programs, evaluation is receiving more attention (Dusewicz, Biester & Kenney, 1987; Koen, Musumeci, Weeks & Capalbo, 1985). Dusewicz et al. (1987) describe evaluation as "...the process of selecting, collecting, and interpreting information needed for decision making. It is essentially research applied to decision making" (p. 4). In essence, the process covers four areas, according to Koen et al. (1985), who recommend: "It is especially important that four evaluation elements be clear: why you want to evaluate, what you want to evaluate, to what extent you want to evaluate, and how you want to evaluate" (p. 1). Who becomes part of the evaluation is an important consideration. Solórzano (1991) recommends that "...program evaluations should be useful to local programs and as such, local programs should become more involved in the process."

Crandall et al. (1984) asked program leaders to define evaluation and they mentioned two methods, "... formal record keeping and internal monitoring of program operation" (p. 252). Generally, most program directors seemed to relate program evaluation as the record keeping process necessary to complete yearly or quarterly reports to funding agencies.

Research suggests that there are other distinctions to be made when evaluating programs. Some feel that one must make the differentiation between program evaluation and personnel evaluation (Willing, 1989). The former focuses on program considerations while the latter focuses on the performance of individual staff persons within the program. Both are important to program management, but do not necessarily need to be conducted during the same evaluation cycle.

Seen in a positive light, program evaluation can serve as a constructive component that addresses program strengths and weaknesses. As Willing (1989) recommends, "After a program is in place, the effective administrator will want to assess whether the program has been implemented as intended, and further, whether it is having the desired results." The author continues, "A healthy, effective program will regularly diagnose problems, seek solutions and employ strategies for change and improvement" (p. 4).

The timing/scheduling of program evaluations is an important consideration. In an adult literacy program in Horry County, South Carolina, an ongoing evaluation design was put in place for the duration of the project (Quickel & Wise, 1982). The Final Evaluation Report states, "An evaluator for the project met quarterly with [project staff] for three years to collect and analyze the materials and direct [the project's] efforts. He submitted a written report each year and at the end of the project" (p. 18). Information for this evaluation was gathered on students, tutors, community, and project staff.

A report by the U.S. Department of Education (1988) recommends that "Student assessment and program evaluation should be ongoing ... yet unfortunately, many adult literacy programs don't collect student assessment and program evaluation data in a systematic way" (p. 53).

Mayer (1985) points out that a literacy program should undertake an annual review of its operations to determine the degree to which its mission and goals are reflected in the program's activities and results. With regard to evaluating learner progress, he proposes five areas of examination:

1. personal literacy goal attainment,
2. reading skills,
3. self-confidence,
4. economic/employment status, and
5. lifelong learning.

The important point to be made here is that an ongoing commitment to program evaluation should be made and seen as beneficial to improve both program and staff effectiveness. The next section will discuss the types of data the literature recommends programs collect, with examples of some programs that are evaluating their activities.

What needs to be evaluated and how? Although most agree that evaluation is important, minimal program evaluation has been conducted. Johnson (1985) observes that "enhancing the scope and quality of the national [literacy] effort is presently hampered by what McCune (1984) aptly calls 'a huge void in the descriptive data about literacy programs' ... little detailed information is available telling 'who is delivering these programs, what they do, how many are served, how well they work, what they cost, how they are funded, and what unmet needs they might have. Student data are in equally short supply with regard to levels of performance, rate of growth, and benefits derived from various instructional approaches" (p. 19).

When data are available, in some cases their interpretation is misleading. For instance, Diekhoff (1988) maintains that "With few exceptions ... published evaluations of adult literacy training have presented an overly optimistic view of the effectiveness of these programs" (p. 624). Diekhoff describes the major data sources of program evaluation as the following:

* data documenting program need,
* program usage and growth data,
* anecdotal, case study data,
* student and tutor self-reports, and
* quality of life data.

Others have described the nature of the evaluation for library literacy programs (Johnson, 1986), and similarities to Diekhoff's categories are apparent. For instance, Johnson points out that statistics on the number of students participating in the program, use of materials, percentage of increase in the use of the library, number of tutors trained, number of referrals to the project, amount of inter-agency cooperation, and changes in students' lives are components of such evaluations.

Evaluations can include both quantitative and qualitative information about program effectiveness. Johnson reported on a study of the American Library Association (1978), which found numerous data sources for retrieving qualitative information for program evaluation purposes. Some common methods for gathering qualitative data identified by Johnson included the following:

- surveys,
- observations,
- anecdotal reports of participants' use and behaviors in libraries,
- case studies,
- student evaluation of personally set goals,
- student reports on changes in their lives,
- follow-up of learner progress via phone calls and personal interviews,
- progress reports by tutors,
- staff evaluations,
- continued existence, and
- continued funding.

While evaluating library literacy programs in California, Lane et al. (1984) attempted to ascertain three questions: 1) How effective has the California Literacy Campaign (CLC) been in reaching and teaching functionally illiterate adults? 2) To what extent is the local community prepared and able to continue the adult literacy program relying exclusively on local resources? and 3) To what extent have the individual projects been implemented according to the program design or derived from the principles explicated in the design prepared by the California State Library (CSL) staff?

Using a discrepancy model (Provus, 1971), and measures of client satisfaction, Lane et al. (1984) concluded that "In six to eight months, most CLC projects had accomplished what it often has taken volunteer literacy programs two years or more to accomplish" (p. 47). In this case, the evaluation was formative, in that it monitored the implementation of the programs to determine if they were conducting the activities that they proposed in their initial grants.

Two years later, Wurzbacher and Yeannakis (1986) sought to answer two additional program questions about the California Literacy Campaign: 1) To what extent were the functional literacy skills of adult learners improved by their participation in local library literacy programs? and 2) To what extent were the lives of adult learners enhanced by their participation in local library literacy programs? These evaluation questions are examples of outcome (summative) measures.

By using reports based on interviews with tutors and adult learners, the authors concluded that, "As a group and in relation to a number of different measures, adult learners and tutors involved in Program Effectiveness Review II left little doubt that most adult learners who participate in California Literacy Campaign (CLC) local library literacy programs evidence functional skills improvement ... and ... the majority of adult learners ... experience some change in their lives as a result of the literacy program experience ..." (p. 62).

In another library-based adult literacy program evaluation (Families For Literacy), the *nature*, *frequency* and *duration* of proposed activities were examined as part of the formative evaluation (Solórzano & Baca, 1991). In this case, not only was the presence of literacy activities examined (e.g., storyreading, lapsits, fingerplays), but their frequency and duration, thus yielding a "level of implementation" perspective from which to categorize program types. An examination of the nature of the interventions (i.e., literacy activities between parents and children), was one focal point of this evaluation.

A variety of data can be gathered to evaluate program progress. For example, Crandall et al. (1984) found that literacy programs in their sample usually mentioned collecting the following data for annual or quarterly reports:

* student test scores,
* hours of attendance for each student,
* completions,
* dropouts,
* number of graduates,
* demographics and ethnicity, and
* goal attainment statistics.

The authors recommend that even though programs were reporting these data to their respective funding sources, the information should also be used for planning, troubleshooting and monitoring trends. Yet, in most cases, evaluation meant "the state form" (p. 269). Unfortunately, most evaluations are seen as satisfying an outsider's (e.g., state, federal, or other funding sources) need for statistical information. Yet evaluations are actually very useful for local programs as well. Willing (1989) echoes this sentiment by asking, "Are the efforts to evaluate students, personnel, facilities and dollars combined into effective decision-making?" (p. 4).

If the program evaluation is to be relevant to the local site, the program director should take an active role in the evaluation process. During their site visitations Crandall et al. (1984), found that directors identified various roles as they relate to program evaluation. They included the director as:

* primary record keeper,
* manager of a network to integrate data from other sites,
* program manager who keeps in constant contact with staff, and
* primary planner ... who uses evaluation data to make decisions.

This latter role highlights the importance of using evaluation data to assist in local program planning and decision making.

The California competency-based education program, which uses the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), was evaluated in 1987 (CBAE, 1987). California passed a "mandate" in 1982 requiring all agencies who planned to receive Section 306 funding (under provisions of the Adult Education Act), to use a competency-based educational system. The time frame for implementation was three years, thus, the need to assess the progress of the mandate became apparent to the Adult Education Field Services Unit (p. 1). The purpose of this evaluation was to answer the following two questions:

1) How have Section 306 agency personnel interpreted the CBAE mandate?
2) What have been the effects of the CBAE mandate on agency management, classroom functioning, and student outcomes?

This evaluation was both formative and summative in nature and resulted in program staff receiving program information in the following nine areas:

1) identification of competencies,
2) use of student profiles,
3) monitoring of student progress,
4) documentation of student competency attainment,
5) placement of students in program (appropriate levels),
6) counseling,
7) appropriate uses of instructional materials,
8) use of a variety of teaching strategies, and
9) development of staff development program.

Information from these nine areas helped the State Department of Education determine how the competency-based mandate had been implemented and the effect it was having on learners and program staff. Based on data from this evaluation, certain areas (e.g., identification of competencies) were found to be implemented well; however, other areas (e.g., counseling services to ESL students) needed more attention. As these findings suggest, successful evaluation can highlight areas of success as well as areas of need.

A Quality Standards for Adult Education Programs guide was developed by six State Directors of Adult Education in order to: 1) develop a common core of quality standards and elements for managing adult education programs, 2) design an instrument which could measure quality standards and elements, and 3) improve program practices for achieving excellence in adult education programs. The guide covers the following program areas:

* administration
* planning
* facilities
* instruction
* staff development
* community involvement
* public relations
* evaluation
* student services

The adult education committee suggests that by applying this guide in local program reviews, various strengths and weaknesses could be identified for program improvement.[6] Also, the National Diffusion Network has designed a stringent evaluation procedure for identifying exemplary programs that weighs three components based on a 15-page report submitted by the candidate program. The components are: 1) program's impact on student, 2) program evaluation, and 3) replication.

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[6] This committee was chaired by Dr. Towey of the Division of Adult Education, U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

What Makes a Successful Program?

Program effectiveness or success is related to factors mentioned in the previous section on evaluation outcomes. In essence, programs are identifying various program and learner outcomes to portray their program's success. Thus, many programs have used quantitative measures to document hours of instruction, recruitment, program growth, job referrals, etc., as program success indicators.

For example, Crandall et al. (1984) mention that the effective programs in their study identified hours of attendance, completions, dropouts, number of graduates, and goal attainment as success areas. They also mention that "There is general acceptance that the use of retention and completion data do show effectiveness" (p. 251).

Barss, Reitzel, and Associates (1972), (quoted in Johnson, 1986), found -- based on their survey of library reading projects -- the following sixteen indicators of success:

1. increase in average attendance,
2. 90 to 100 percent regular attendance,
3. increase in regular attendance,
4. cooperation with community agencies,
5. program director's judgement of project benefits accrued,
6. changes in library use (e.g., circulation, number and type of users, types of materials circulated),
7. changes in library operation (e.g., policies, budget allocations),
8. requests for program expansion,
9. program staff reactions,
10. nonprogram staff reaction,
11. inquiries about the program from other libraries or groups,
12. adoption of program by at least one other library,
13. program director's citation that the program met its goals,
14. program director's view of affect of program on library, participants, and community,
15. total attendance at all sites of 1000 or more, and
16. change in participants' skills or behavior.

As one can see from this list, many of the success factors deal with program attendance data, the director's judgement of the program's success, changes in library services, outside referrals, and learner skills improvement. These factors are not necessarily ranked by importance, but these data do give a broad view of outcome measures for evaluating program success.

In a study of 54 rural exemplary programs, Hone (1984) identified a sample of effective practices that included the following:

* use of videos and forms of technology for instruction and program management,
* use of qualified community members as part-time faculty,
* use of mobile classrooms,
* use of "career vans" that go out to the community and provide academic counseling,

- provide transportation for learners to and from instructional sites or other program locations,
- corporate scholarships provided to students,
- use of peer teachers, and
- use of home cable T.V. video lessons (on a subscription basis).

The successful features of these programs seem to reflect the "need for communication" aspect inherent in rural situations. For instance, providing transportation, mobile classrooms etc., shows the necessity of reaching out to the students. The need for flexible policies -- since students need to overcome transportation, weather or communications problems to come to class -- is an important consideration for rural programs.

Although improvements in attendance, retention, and outreach are desirable program outcomes, others are more skeptical of data not directly related to learners' reading improvement. For example, Diekhoff (1988) states that "Any evaluation that fails to document reading improvements has failed to document program effectiveness" (p. 627). Still others have found that "affective" outcomes are just as important as quantitative measures (Crandall et al. 1984; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Heathington, 1987).

Determining success of adult literacy programs is indeed philosophic (depending on one's definition of adult literacy) and to some degree, controversial. Interestingly, Crandall et al. (1984) state that "Our conversations with literacy educators underscore the fact that they share no common criteria for measuring success. Standards of success range from attracting high numbers of recruits to making fundamental changes in people's lives" (p. 336). This study found that few directors could describe their methods or standards for judging program effectiveness. Consequently, measuring program success is a controversial issue in terms of the lack of agreement about the standards by which success can be judged as well as the problematic issue it creates for most literacy programs fighting for their share of highly competitive resources (p. 337).

The California Competency-Based Adult Education evaluation (CBAE, 1987) documented success by noting that procedures for implementing CASAS had been followed -- especially by "high-implementing" programs and that many programs had accomplished, to varying degrees, the following:

- identified competencies,
- increased the number of programs developing student profiles,
- increased the number of programs using the CASAS Survey Achievement Test,
- most agencies had established a structured system for placing students in programs,
- increased use of appropriate materials,
- increased use of a variety of teaching strategies, and
- increased staff development opportunities.

Many programs document the changes in learners' reading level as indicators of success. For instance, Pasch and Oakley (1985) noted that learners increased at least one grade level -- and probably more -- after 50 hours of instruction. The CBAE evaluation study noted that "high implementing" program students achieved a greater average gain on the CASAS Survey Achievement Test than students from the "low implementing" agencies after 100 hours of instruction.

Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) found "success" to be different from grade-level increases when viewed by the learners themselves. In a study of adult learners in New Jersey's adult basic skills education program, they asked learners what impact the program had on their subsequent reading, writing, and mathematics improvement. They also asked questions about learners' job status, impact on their families, and other affective outcomes of participating in the program. The authors found that successful outcomes from the learners' point of view were not necessarily related to the job or even skills development, but the most important benefit was related to affective outcomes like "enhanced self-confidence or self-esteem" (p. 22).

Judging from this review, effective programs gather data from both the program level (attendance, retention), and learner level (improvements in literacy levels determined by tests and/or self-reports, improvements in self-esteem, and goal attainment). The decision as to which learner assessment measures to use depends -- to a large extent -- on program philosophy, learner needs and goals, program resources, and the funding source's criteria for success.

The next section will discuss effective outreach and recruitment practices and their implications for different types of learners.

III. OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

Many adults in need of literacy improvement are not eager to come forward and enroll in programs. Although the reasons are many, the stigma attached to not being able to read and write well enough to function in today's society is probably the main reason. For this reason, these adults are considered hard-to-reach. Attracting the "hard-to-reach" adult learner is a difficult task. Johnson (1985) reports that "As numerous studies emphasize, ABE programs operating through the public system, and national volunteer programs operating primarily with middle-class volunteers, have both tended to attract only the 'cream' of the illiterate population, those already comfortable enough with traditional educational norms to self-select into such programs and who are most easily served: most motivated and higher up on the educational ladder" (p. 7).

Thus, to recruit the hard-to-reach learner takes a special effort. Successful programs attract the "hard-to-reach" learner not by accident, but through careful planning. Yet this is easier said than done. Lehr (1983) recommends that "we must find ways to attract more illiterate adults to literacy programs. To do this, program developers need a better understanding of who the illiterate are, what their needs are, and how they view themselves" (p. 117).

Getting a better understanding of who needs literacy instruction and what their needs are may differ from location to location. For instance, Balmuth (1987) states that since "...the specifics of practical needs differ from community to community, ABE program planning should include a survey to determine those needs for the prospective program clientele, provide the most feasible means to meet them, and make sure that those provisions are clearly and sensitively communicated as part of any recruitment process" (p. 8).

The importance of needs assessments geared to help programs identify potential clients is also supported by Crandall et al. (1984), who found in their survey of adult literacy programs that a needs assessment "...provides essential data on the demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics of an area in which a program hopes to operate. By conducting an assessment, a program can ensure where and for whom literacy training is needed" (p. 113).

This point was reinforced in a study conducted on a statewide library-based adult literacy campaign. In analyzing the "least successful" and "most successful" adult literacy projects regarding student and tutor recruitment, Lane et al. (1984), found that projects having the most trouble getting students are projects which:

1. had not identified specific student target populations initially,
2. had not attempted any nontraditional publicity efforts aimed at students,
3. did not have a coalition in each community in which they are working, and
4. had fewer learning sites -- and most or all were located in libraries.

The authors suggest that "It would seem that the projects need to re-do or refine their needs assessment activities" (p. 48).

Therefore, based on an initial needs assessment, most effective programs plan their recruitment strategies. Balmuth (1987) recommends four activities for recruitment: 1) door-to-door or telephone canvassing, 2) print and media publicity, 3) referrals from established institutions, and 4) referrals from business and industry. Solórzano and Baca (1991) surveyed 22 family literacy programs in California and found that programs most often used "other print" (e.g., brochures, flyers, posters) to attract learners.

Although these strategies are generally accepted as successful, how they are implemented and for whom these strategies are targeted can make a difference. For instance, some suggest that with undereducated hard-to-reach adults, "personal sources are more effective than non-personal." Whereas information disseminated through the media "serves well-educated people best" (Bock, 1980; Cross, 1978).

The "message" printed materials present to learners is very important. Recruitment messages should be honest with the learners relative to what they can do. For example, Smith (1989) warns that "Literacy does not guarantee jobs or a better life...no matter how extravagant the claims made for it" (p. 358). Thus, recruitment messages should present a "realistic yet hopeful" picture of the possibilities" (Balmuth, 1987, p. 9). Crandall et al. (1984) also caution that "When programs promise what they cannot realistically deliver, when they create potentially long waiting lists, when they fail to meet the needs of the diversity of learners they solicit, they put a 'break' in the first link of the program chain" (p. 105).

The wording of the recruitment message is also important. Hone (1984) found that recruitment literature in rural areas was "refreshingly free of technical post-secondary jargon such as 'matriculation' and 'articulation' or the like" (p. 16).

Solórzano and Baca (1991) found that adult literacy recruitment messages in many cases were tailored to the audience for which they were meant. For example, messages geared to pre-schools often read: "Help yourself and your child."

Part of conveying a realistic picture to adults and possibly getting good results is to let them know -- through the program's recruitment literature -- that certain "situational barriers" (Cross, 1978) will be addressed by the program -- if, of course -- the program does provide such services. Situational barriers as described by Cross are "those arising from one's situation in life, such as lack of time due to job and home responsibilities, lack of money or child care, and lack of transportation" (See Lehr, 1983, pp. 177-178). These barriers are indeed real for many hard-to-reach adults. For instance, Fitzgerald (1984) discovered -- after interviewing 100 adults from a midwestern slum area -- that "... the hard core illiterate's most pressing needs are primarily of an economic, social and psychological nature. Until these needs are met, these adults cannot be expected to register in ABE programs" (p. 27).

Wallerstein (1984) confirms that successful programs have recruitment advertisement messages that stress upfront that programs provide child care, transportation or even counseling to potential participants.

Situational barriers for rural learners include geographical distances, severe climate fluctuations, inadequate public transportation, sparse populations and limited communication systems (Hone, 1984). Thus, recruitment literature in rural areas needs to address these issues as well.

Another message that the printed material should emphasize is the unique nature of adult education and anonymity. For instance, the recruitment message should stress the difference between the program's adult learning activities and traditional school programs (Knowles, 1980; Darling, 1981), as well as emphasize the confidential nature of the program (Resnick & Robinson, 1975; Darling, 1981). Based on research conducted by Hayes (1989), emphasizing the uniqueness of adult literacy programs (compared to traditional school-based settings) could overcome the "Self/School Incongruence" factor that keeps Hispanic adults from participating in literacy programs.

Because many illiterate adults do not see themselves as having a problem coping with everyday situations, Darling suggests that the recruitment appeal should concentrate on employment, children, and basic skills. Again, care must be taken on what the program promises learners in relationship to employment and subsequent successes (Smith, 1989).

A study by the U.S. Department of Education identifies some potentially effective recruiting strategies:

* recommendations of friends and peers in the community and in the workplace are believed by many to be most effective;

* testimonials from successful program alumni, current students, and program staff also have credibility;

* advertisements in newspapers and magazines and on posters are seen by many; and

* public service announcements on popular radio stations and television reach millions.

Recruiting locations are an important consideration. Solórzano and Baca (1991) found in their comprehensive review of 22 library-based family literacy programs in California, that adults were recruited from child care programs, children's library section of main library, family service agencies, and schools. Recruitment efforts can also be directed at social service agencies, community groups, and employers. These groups can assist in "spreading the word" among adults needing literacy services (Crandall et al. 1984; Waite, 1984). Also, forming meaningful relationships with these community sectors can strengthen the program's network within the different community agencies. These data suggest that recruitment location is an important factor depending on the emphasis of the program -- in this case, family literacy. Job-related programs might recruit at the workplace whereas basic skills programs might focus in on community service agencies.

What Media or Printed Material Strategies do Programs Use to Recruit Volunteer Tutors?

Many adult literacy programs do not differentiate between methods for recruiting learners and tutors. Crandall et al. (1984) point out the importance of print such as newspapers, posters, brochures, flyers, and bulletins when done in "simple ... easy to read language" in recruiting both tutors and learners.

Solórzano and Baca (1991) report similar findings indicating that volunteer tutors and adults participating in library-based programs were usually recruited using "other print" e.g., brochures, flyers, posters, targeted at library programs, community-based organizations, and local churches. One program even used business cards rather effectively in their recruitment campaign.

Careful planning on just how these printed materials will convey the "right" message to potential participants must be considered. Eggert (1984) found that "...[the] style of recruitment posters, who answers the [program office] phone and how, and who endorses the program, will each have an impact on who is served and how." (pp. 8-9).

Although some studies have reported that learners first hear about literacy programs via the radio or television, the SRA study (1987) found during their interviews with program personnel that PROJECT PLUS [PSA's] was seen as much more effective in recruiting volunteer tutors than in recruiting adult learners into literacy programs. Supporting the notion that media can attract both tutors and learners, Mikulecky (1986) reports on the evaluation of the Advertising Council's Volunteer Against Illiteracy program, conducted by Newman (1986). He found that "... 8000 of the new teachers and 10,000 of the new students came to literacy programs via the special 800 telephone number set up by the advertising campaign" (p. 22).

In an evaluation of the Horry County Reading Crusade, Quickel and Wise (1982) gathered information on tutors and reported that tutors were primarily recruited through the following strategies:

- the use of T.V. spot announcements,
- newspaper articles,
- church bulletin inserts, and
- word-of-mouth.

The use of radio and TV PSA's has been supported by other research as well, as a viable method for recruiting adults. For instance, Smith-Burke (1987) found -- when interviewing a small sample of low-level adult readers in New York -- that radio and television advertisements were the major means that learners found out about the program.

Lane et al. (1984) asked adults participating in the library-based California Literacy Campaign how they first found out about the program. The most common response was television (25%), a family member (13%), the library (11%), a friend (11%), radio (9%), and school or teacher (9%).

Two years later, Wurzbacher and Yeannakis (1986) surveyed a sample of 104 adult learners participating in the California Literacy Campaign (CLC) and found that two-thirds of the participants first heard about the literacy program either through the broadcast media or from people close to them in their lives, thus supporting Lane's findings.

This is similar to the findings of Pasch and Oakley (1985) who discovered that tutors first heard about Project LEARN, "... from [the following] sources — the newspaper (48), family member or friend (46), publicity on T.V. (32), and announcements at churches (26)."

The media, though effective, must be viewed with caution. For example, timing of radio PSA's must be synchronized with program recruitment timelines, otherwise programs will receive calls after the recruitment has been conducted and may be unable to serve the overflow of requests. Also, the program needs to judge the geographic area that the PSA message will cover. In some cases, learners from miles away will hear the message, yet be unable to reach the literacy program office because of transportation problems, thus again putting the program in an awkward position, and perhaps hurting its reputation in the community.

The use of referrals from community agencies is a valuable recruitment tool. National efforts at creating networks among the major stakeholders in adult literacy have proved successful since in many cases programs realized that "... cooperation among the diverse stakeholders – policy makers, funders, providers, and consumers – is essential to developing and sustaining the resources necessary to meet the needs of adult learners cost effectively" (Williams, 1988, p. 4).

In addition to providing printed material to community agencies, literacy program staff can make presentations to the organizations and community groups. However, recruitment efforts directed to established institutions must be carefully planned to include provisions for follow-up on requested services – otherwise these efforts may show disappointing results (Greenleigh Associates, 1969; Long, 1981). Yet the potential for referrals from agencies is great. Irish (1980) found that "agency referral was the single most effective recruitment tool among those used in urban areas" (p. 47). Others have also found that networking with educational and social service agencies, with whom the literacy program has maintained a relationship, is beneficial (August & Havrilesky, 1983).

Solórzano and Baca (1991) found that family literacy programs were quite successful in recruiting tutors from churches, children's services section of the library, child care centers, and family service agencies.

Employers and unions can be a valuable resource for recruitment (Stauffer, 1980), especially if "respectable employment" is the message (or possibility) linked to the recruitment effort (Irish, 1980), or a possible by-product (Crandall et al. 1984). Although employers seem to be a natural for literacy referrals, especially given the benefits of having a literate workforce (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor, 1987), Darling (1981) cautions that this may not be a good practice since many employed literacy students hide their reading deficiencies from their employers.

As with media, word-of-mouth is an effective technique in recruiting hard-to-reach learners, yet how it is done and from whose mouth the message comes can be important. It has been suggested that programs can be more effective if the person providing the message is from the adult's peer group (Mulvey, 1969), a friend or relative (Stauffer, 1973), a current student in the program (Greenleigh Associates, 1969), or a former program student (Darling, 1981; Crandall et al., 1984). Word-of-mouth techniques have great potential for recruiting minorities as well (Crandall et al., 1984). The authors suggest that "In this day and age, the reputation [of the literacy program] on the street level is extremely important...Rumors about the consistent poor performance of tutors or teachers escapes easily into the community grapevine" (p. 116). A quote from a literacy program director sums up their findings on recruitment: "quality sells itself" (p. 116).

Implicit in word-of-mouth recruitment strategies is the premise that the program's reputation is good in the community. Thus, the *word* about the program is positive. Pasch and Oakley (1985) asked their sample of 181 adult learners "How did you first hear of Project LEARN?" (p. 9). "... a majority of the students responded "family member, friend" (39), followed by "television" (26), and "social service agency" (10). Solórzano and Baca (1991) found that word-of-mouth was a popular method for attracting learners to California library-literacy programs.

In the SRA study of adult schools, community colleges, library-based and community-based programs, the authors found that, "word-of-mouth was the most effective means of recruitment for all four service delivery areas" (p. 78). For adult schools, PSA's and stories in newspapers were the second best recruitment strategies. For community colleges, posters served their purposes of recruitment second to word-of-mouth. For libraries, T.V. and newspaper PSA's equally attracted learners, while posters were second best recruiters for CBO's. As mentioned earlier, Solórzano and Baca (1991) found that "other print" (brochures, flyers, posters) was the most-used method for recruiting both tutors and learners in library-based family literacy programs in California.

A different twist to word-of-mouth efforts is to not wait for the "community grapevine" to push the program, but to get the word out by visiting adults in their home. Similar to door-to-door canvasing, Irish (1980) found that home visits to recruit learners for the ABE program showed better results compared to recruitment methods using flyers or word-of-mouth.

How are the Low-literate Language Minority Populations Recruited?

There is little direction provided by the literature regarding the recruitment of language minority populations. Methods for attracting language minority populations are limited to translations of posters and flyers, and radio PSA's on favorite Spanish-speaking radio stations. In some instances churches and organizations that are trusted by specific minority populations are contacted to provide learners.

Crandall et al. (1984) also found that the adult literacy programs they surveyed tried to target minority populations "through community bulletins, or through employers in industries that hire low-skill labor" (p. 107).

The media can play an important role in recruiting both language minority and majority adults. Supporting the use of media to recruit beginning readers from specific minority backgrounds, Stauffer (1980) found that "employer [referrals] and television were the high percent categories for [recruiting] Blacks..." Similarly suggesting the importance of the media for attracting certain language minority groups, Crandall et al. (1984) reported that Public Service Announcements (PSA's) on Spanish speaking radios, or popular rock, soul or reggae stations can be successful for certain minority learners. Also, because of the dispersion of learners, radio and television ads are effective in rural areas (Crandall et al. 1984).

However, as with recruitment methods for English speaking adults, word-of-mouth remains a viable recruitment strategy for non-English speaking groups as well.

In the final analysis, recruitment represents a comprehensive effort. Programs should initially conduct a needs assessment identifying: learners' literacy levels, potential barriers to participation, extent of community resources; then design the program's "plan of action" to address these needs. It appears that when programs are viewed by the community as viable and successful, the program takes on a life of its own. As Crandall et al. (1984) observe, "Surprisingly, limited recruitment may be a sign of a very successful program -- a program that has analyzed its strengths, has targeted those learners it can help, and has built its community reputation on delivering what it promises" (p. 117).

On the other hand, limited recruitment may also mean that the demand for literacy services exceeds the supply (or capabilities of the provider) regardless of program quality. In California, for instance, ABE and community college programs rarely need to recruit for ESL classes since they are filled to capacity.

Obviously, recruitment is the first, essential step. But recruitment is only half of the picture. Keeping learners in the program long enough to make an impact on their lives is another challenge. This topic will be discussed in the next section.

IV. LEARNER RETENTION

Once programs have successfully recruited learners, they need to keep them in the program long enough to make some impact on their literacy levels. This is indeed an important issue since attrition rates in adult literacy programs range from 30% to 60%. Harman (1984) suggests that half of the adults in literacy programs drop out. Since most adult literacy programs are open entry/exit programs, learners are basically free to come and go as they please. If programs are not meeting basic needs -- academic and/or social -- adults will leave. The SRA study in California found that "Once students overcame the obstacles and managed to enroll in a literacy program, significant numbers failed to stay with the program" (p. 79).

Harris (1984) points out that "... retention of students is a function of the quality of the services the student receives; that is usually indicated by the precision with which the student is matched with the tutor, and the degree to which the student's tutoring sessions are scheduled at a place and time that is comfortable for that student" (p. 12). The author feels the same for tutor retention as well, stating "Similarly, the retention of volunteers is a function of the quality of staff support that they get and the volunteers' perception of the strength of the organization and management of the local literacy council" (p. 12).

Figures for dropouts seem to be well documented. Bowren (1987) reports that for many programs, 39% of the participants drop out before the 19th hour of instruction. She adds that the percentage increases to 60% by the 39th hour and to 90% by the 99th hour of instruction. The SRA study found that adult schools, community colleges and libraries in their California sample reported that the average length of time adult learners stayed in literacy programs ran between seven and nine months, while for CBO's the average was eighteen months (p. 79). Others have reported the CBO's ability to retain a relatively higher percentage of learners in their programs than ABE programs -- 65-70 percent compared to 25-50 percent for mainstream programs (BCEL, 1986).

Reasons Learners Leave Programs

Determining the reasons learners leave programs remains elusive. There is still a question as to whether learners leave for personal reasons or if they are dissatisfied with the program (e.g., tutor, materials, instruction, etc.). Interestingly, over twenty years ago, Houle (1964) found five reasons -- that seem to apply today -- why learners leave adult literacy programs. They are:

1. students accomplish goals,
2. students have low basic aptitudes and cannot keep up with their work,
3. [students'] personal problems,
4. students are dissatisfied with instruction, and
5. students are dissatisfied with administrative policies.

Balmuth (1987) suggests that "Researchers tend to conclude that withdrawal is less often a failure of the program itself than a result of outside forces, although factors within the program may play a part" (p. 30). Smith-Burke (1987) asked adults in her study why they dropped out of other literacy programs in which they had formerly participated. The respondents faulted the programs and characterized them as being insensitive or educationally ineffective ... or they noted personal reasons such as moving, needing child care, or having to leave for financial reasons.

As part of a statewide longitudinal data gathering effort (Solórzano, 1989, 1991), information was examined from program annual reports covering three years to discover why learners leave the California Literacy Campaign (CLC) adult literacy program. The reason most often given was "met goals," followed by "moved," "job change," and "referred to other program." Leavers represented less than 40% of total participants in the years studied.

Using an indirect method, Pasch and Oakley (1985) asked tutors why they thought learners left the program. The greatest number indicated "Lack of motivation, discouragement (26%), followed by "employment reasons, tutor left program, family problems, health reasons, moved, -- all of which accounted for 5% to 15% of the responses" (p. 4).

Cross (1978) provides a framework to describe the different barriers to learner participation in literacy programs. When she reviewed 30 studies of participation in adult education, she found that the obstacles deterring participants fell into the following three broad categories:

1. *situational barriers* (lack of time, money, child care, transportation),
2. *dispositional barriers* (learner's attitude and perception of own learning potential), and
3. *institutional barriers* (inconvenient scheduling, fees, course offerings, locations)

Cross cautions that addressing situational and institutional barriers only will not necessarily result in successful retention or participation rates.

The importance of dispositional barriers was highlighted in a study by Fingeret (1982), where she surveyed 40 urban illiterate adults and found that these learners had a negative image of "literate people." While respondents wanted to know how to read and write, several were proud of their "common sense" learning contrasted to "book learning."

Brod (1990) quotes a Bean et al. (1990) study that identifies three factors/barriers to adult participation in programs: 1) personal factors, 2) program factors, and 3) external factors. Personal factors are low self-esteem, daily pressures, negative perception of the value of education, and age. Program factors range from lack of appropriate materials, inappropriate placement to a poor tutor-learner match and lack of peer support. External factors involve health care, child care, transportation and counseling.

Hayes' (1989) study on Hispanic adults describes a "deterrent to participation" category called "Self/School Incongruence" that relates closely to the "dispositional barriers" described by Cross. In this case, adults' feelings that they are "too old to learn," or "don't want to answer questions in front of class," cause Hispanic adults to stay away from adult literacy programs.

A study by the U.S. Department of Education (1988) verifies the importance of "circumstances" in the lives of the learners as having a direct effect on their attendance. The authors state, "Circumstance may have a significant effect on attendance and sustained participation of adult students in literacy programs ... Of the 440,000 enrollees (out of 3.1 million enrolled in adult federal and state funded adult education classes in 1985-86) who left before completing their objectives, thirty-five percent identified specific limiting factors such as health and day-care problems, changed residence, and problems with transportation" (pp. 9-10).

Houle (1964) also found frequently mentioned problems encountered by learners that lead to their dropping out. They include:

* increased workload,
* illness,
* greater family responsibilities,
* financial problems,
* military duty,
* conflict in schedule with some necessary activity,
* need to travel,
* permanent movement out of town, and
* difficulty of catching up after interruption in the schedule.

Poor attendance can be a precursor to dropping out. Smith-Burke (1987) found in her study of adults in New York that learners missed sessions because of health problems, a variety of family-related issues such as child care and legal matters, job conflicts, transportation problems and lack of progress. These reasons for poor attendance ultimately become reasons for dropping out.

For example, if learners begin to fall behind in their lessons, they may become discouraged with their lack of progress and leave the program. Some suggest that flexible scheduling, enrolling only those students who will commit themselves to regular attendance, providing one-on-one tutoring to make up missed lessons, providing computer-based instructional materials to allow students to work at their own pace, and developing mandatory homework that students can handle on their own, can address the problem of learner dropout and sporadic attendance due to learners' inability to keep up with the work load (U.S. Department of Education, 1988). This is especially important since previous research suggests that because of initial low skills, it is difficult for learners to keep pace with instruction (Houle, 1964).

Interestingly, the nature of the program itself (e.g., its delivery system) may be conducive to high attrition rates. Crandall et al. (1984) identified some structural elements of programs that were related to high dropout rates. These elements include the following:

* programs geared to the 4-7 grade level learner were more likely to have a dropout rate above 30% than other programs

* Programs open only 1-4 days per week had higher dropout rates than programs open 5-6 days per week

Sometimes, finding out the "true" reason learners leave the program is difficult. It may well be, as Bowren (1987) points out, that although learners usually cite reasons related to job, home, health, and transportation, it could be that leaving is actually related to the perceived or actual rate of learning. Do these programs really accomplish what they purport to do? How much difference is really made in the lives of the participants? Diekhoff (1988) paints a dim picture: "The majority of adult literacy participants do not accomplish meaningful, practically significant reading improvements and leave training without achieving 'functional literacy,' however one may choose to define it" (p. 625).

Reasons Learners Stay in Programs

Learners who cannot read are usually at a disadvantage in society, thus, their problems include more than just not being able to read. Their problems can also be economic, political, and social in nature – not just academic. Trying to address all of adult learners' problems may be asking too much of literacy programs, yet identifying reasons why learners do stay in programs is a first step. Below is a discussion of some successful attempts to address this problem.

Whether a program can keep a learner might depend on the very first impression or visit to the program office. Bock (1980) states that "This is the stage when many under-educated participants drop out ... and it calls for assurance that the first class session will be a positive experience" (p. 127). The first session is just one of three critical time periods that learners are considered at-risk of dropping out. For instance, some suggest that adults are at-risk of leaving after the first week, and again after the three- and nine- month periods (Patterson & Pulling, 1981), or at the beginning of the year (Darling, 1981). Therefore, focusing attention and services (e.g., counseling, social events, progress reports) to learners during these critical periods could help increase learner participation and reduce attrition.

Emphasis on the importance of the first contact with the learner is also mentioned by Diekhoff and Diekhoff (1984). They found that programs can increase retention rates by identifying – and addressing – certain learner characteristics (e.g., age, reasons for coming for literacy instruction, characteristics of learner's family, employment status, and race) during the intake procedure to identify at-risk adults who may be potential dropouts.

Balmuth (1987) also underscores the importance of the intake procedure by stating that, "It should include a review of the student's educational history, and a discussion of the student's perceptions of the problem, its origins, and any insights the student has into ways that he or she learns best — all designed to involve the student in an objective appraisal of the problem and thus start the process of dealing with it" (p. 10).

Since low-literate adults also have other problems in addition to reading and writing, counseling can be an important retention factor. As Grabowski (1976) points out while referring to one of the few studies addressing the issue of counseling's impact on the adult learner, "... there is more progression among counseled groups than the noncounseled groups in the area of educational, occupational, and social categories" (p. 225). Cross (1978) states that low-income groups are more interested in counseling and advisory services than high- income groups ... therefore, counseling services should be overrepresented in low-income areas" (p. 40).

The importance of counseling for minority adults is supported by Hayes (1989) in that initial counseling could allay fears of Hispanic adults regarding their perceptions of "classroom-type" activities.

One program found counseling to be very important to the adult participants and integrated it into all facets of the program. As a matter of fact, staff found that higher retention rates and reading achievement were attributed to the counseling which was integrated into the program's recruitment, staff training, instruction, and evaluation components (Darling, 1981). Scores increased almost two grade levels after 82 hours of instruction. The importance of counseling and its relationship to attendance and achievement is underscored in this program example. For instance, it was found that attendance was related more to achievement than to teaching methodology.

In many cases, program staff cannot assume precisely what factors will keep adults in the program. For example, fulfilling one's social needs may improve their attendance and retention rates. Some learners may see the opportunity to socialize while at the literacy program and -- as a result -- they keep returning. In fact, adults have mentioned that socializing before, during, or after class was very enjoyable (Newman, 1980; Darling, 1981; Jones & Petry, 1980). Providing amenities and creating a friendly atmosphere can only enhance a program's chances for assuring that learners feel comfortable, and, therefore, likely to return.

Family support for the learner's participation has been found to have a positive effect on retention (Smith-Burke, 1987) and progress (Quickel & Wise, 1982). For example, Smith-Burke reports, "It is almost impossible to conceive of any adult learner wanting to continue without the support and encouragement of the people significant in his or her life" (p. 40). When respondents to Smith-Burke's interview were asked to state the major factors positively affecting their attendance, the majority mentioned "family support" (p. 40). This includes friends and employers as well. Quickel and Wise (1982), examined "non-reading" adults and "poor reading" adults and found that "The student makes better progress when his family is supportive" (p. 15).

In addition to addressing *affective* aspects of the learner, generally, learners themselves need to know that they are succeeding as well. Wallace (1965) suggests "Adult students cannot fail today and succeed tomorrow; for if they fail today, they will not be back tomorrow" (pp. 43-44). Apparently, then, learners will persist in literacy programs if the learning activities are useful in meeting their objectives (Anderson & Darkenwald, 1979).

Learners' perception of success is related to their retention. Brod (1990) discusses learners' perceptions of success as they relate to realistic goal-setting.

> *"A program, a teacher, or a student may set ambitious long-term goals (e.g., to obtain a GED) that these goals are soon perceived by the student as unattainable, even if the teacher can see progress. If the teacher breaks tasks down into small, realistic chunks (e.g., write a simple sentence from dictation; locate the cause effect in a GED social studies lesson) and students see the progress they are making, then the situation is likely to lead to perception of success."*

Providing learning activities that seem useful to the learner might be tied to the materials used during the instructional sessions. For instance, an earlier study by Hutchinson (1978) reported that adults who received instruction with teacher-made selections based on learners' stated interests attended sessions 30% more than the control group receiving instruction from commercially prepared materials and kits. This seems to show that choice of instructional materials and methods may impact learners' decisions to stay in the program.

Providing meaningful and useful instruction may be the bottom line as to whether learners stay or leave. Instructional materials that are too simplistic or have little relevance to learners' life situations may insult learners and affect participation (Brod, 1990). Boraks and Schumacher (1981) found in their study of 14 Adult Beginning Readers (ABRs) that "ABRs who felt that teachers did not consider how they wanted to learn tended to drop out" (p. 14). Darkenwald (1975) found that by teaching non-traditional subjects like consumer education, health education and coping skills, learner dropout rates decreased and attendance increased. Thus, how and what an adult learns seems to be important and related to retention.

As mentioned earlier in this section, identifying certain adult characteristics can "flag" potential problems and suggest the need to provide interventions to keep the learner in the program. Diekhoff and Diekhoff (1984) examined demographic data and other personal information from 66 adult learners in Texas and found the following five variables to be significantly related to persistence:

1. age,
2. GED training,
3. illiteracy in the family,
4. employment status, and
5. race.

The authors found that, as age increased, persistence in the program became more likely; adults who stated upon entry into the program that they wanted to pursue subsequent GED training were more likely to persist; if other family members were literate, chances were that the learner would continue with the program; learners who were employed usually stayed in the program; and Hispanics were more likely to drop out. The authors suggest two reasons for this latter finding: 1) minorities drop out because of the mismatch between them and their middle and upper class White tutors who fail to understand or empathize with a different culture, and/or 2) Hispanics learned English as a second language and probably found learning to read a more difficult task than did native speakers of English (p. 41).

Other characteristics of learners who persisted were uncovered by Anderson and Darkenwald (1979). While surveying 9,000 participants in adult education programs to determine why learners choose to participate, how satisfied they were, and reasons for their persistence, the authors observed that the amount of formal schooling completed was the best indicator of persistence followed by age of learner (older learners did not seek more education... this is in contrast to Diekhoff & Diekhoff's previously presented findings). Apparently minorities were more at-risk as noted by the following finding: "The researchers also discovered that low socioeconomic status in combination with being young and Black had a pronounced negative effect on persistence."

Thus, based on these two accounts, Blacks and Hispanics seem to be more prone to dropping out of adult literacy programs. Further study in this area is warranted to uncover the reasons for this situation.

Finally, understanding why learners leave or stay in programs remains elusive. Program staff cannot assume why learners participate in their programs. For instance, research suggests that learners' reasons for participating in literacy programs may not always be tied to finding a job or work-related. Darkenwald and Valentine (1984) found that the most important outcomes or benefits to learners in ABE programs had little to do with employment. They quote the work of Kent (1973) who found in a national study that two-thirds of the adults surveyed gave self-improvement, not employability, as the chief reason for attending (p. 11).

By and large, programs must design their services with the adult learner in mind -- or they won't keep them. This idea can be best summed up by a passage in an unpublished U.S. Department of Education study (1988):

> *Keeping adults coming to class requires designing programs that respond to their characteristics, needs and goals -- whether at work, in the community, or in the family. Adult literacy programs that work, focus*

> *on the needs of the students to be served; plan activities that best suit their learning characteristics; and join with other organizations such as social service agencies, health centers, employment agencies, churches, schools, and community centers to help meet the students' needs. The more students find that the literacy program responds to their needs, the more likely they are to come to class and keep coming until their individual goals have been met (p. 13).*

In addition to other program areas described earlier, developing appropriate recruitment and retention strategies ultimately becomes part of a program management style. The next section addresses effective program management characteristics, with an emphasis on human and fiscal resources.

V. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program management is a term that encompasses a variety of elements. It refers to the program's use of human and fiscal resources, its approach to staff training/development, public relations and community involvement, and use of program evaluation. Balmuth (1987) describes the term "administrative structures" of program operations to encompass staff development, retention, attendance, counseling and time" (p. 28). She suggests that much of the success or failure of programs is due to these administrative structures.

Mayer (1985) describes management in the following terms:

* staff management
* financial management
* office management
* records management
* reporting

Under staff management come personnel practices that include clear expectations for both paid and volunteer staff, use of volunteers, prevention of burnout by rewarding personnel, internal coordination for planning and coordinating activities, and engendering feelings of ownership through continual communication among staff.

Financial management includes sound fiscal management of expenditures, maintenance of a diversified financial support system, and fundraising from sources consistent with the program's mission statement.

Office management begins with maintaining an identifiable and accessible location and insuring that it is adequately equipped.

Records management entails determination of record keeping needs, developing a system for maintaining and updating learner and instructor records, and compiling summary data that reveal the program's level of activity and performance.

Finally, with regard to reporting, the author recommends that programs submit reports in a timely fashion and be accountable to their boards, participants, funding sources and the community at-large.

Crandall et al. (1984) point out that program directors -- while in their roles as managers -- build strong collaborative staff teams and solve problems that erode staff and learner morale (p. 303). This sentiment has also been echoed by the authors of the U.S. Department of Education's (1988) study on adult literacy programs that work. They recommend that programs "Build and nurture a 'team spirit' among the program staff and students by emphasizing a sense of mission in an adult literacy program" (p. 56).

In sum, program management is the structure or blueprint for subsequent program operations. It usually entails all of the facets of the program's being, from the methods programs use to recruit learners and tutors, to methods of evaluating the program, fundraising and networking with other community agencies. In the next section, a discussion of how programs use different resources -- both human and fiscal -- will be presented.

What Kinds of Human and Fiscal Resources do Programs Have?

Human resources. In terms of human resources, programs normally have a coordinator or director, and, depending on program size, a support staff of assistants and coordinators to run the program's daily operations. Generally speaking, library-based and community-based organizations use volunteers to teach and perform other program tasks, while literacy programs that operate out of school districts or community colleges have more resources from which to draw. They usually pay their instructors (who are usually credentialed), and staff (who in many cases are former instructors).

The presence of paid staff can have an effect on program recruitment and perhaps other areas of management. Harris (1984) acknowledges the importance of paid staff by reporting about programs in South Carolina where those organizations that have a full-time or part-time paid professional coordinator are the ones that attract and retain the largest number of students registered and the largest number of available tutors.

Yet, as mentioned above, not all programs (even ABE and community college) have substantial budgets to pay coordinators to train, counsel, or recruit and therefore must rely primarily on volunteers to perform these functions. For instance, Chisman (1989) reports that "There are practically no full-time adult basic skills teachers in the United States, for the simple reasons that very few public or private programs operate full-time, pay a competitive wage, or provide benefits. Most teachers are part-time professionals or volunteers. Their primary training and career paths are outside this field" (p. 8).

The SRA (1987) study in California found in their program sample of ABE, community colleges, library and community-based programs that community colleges and adult school programs rely upon paid professional staff teaching primarily in a classroom setting, whereas many public library literacy programs and community-based programs use trained volunteer tutors to provide instruction to adults on a one-to-one basis.

In addition to program personnel, many programs have an advisory board or steering committee to approve budgets, activities and mission statements. Harris (1984) recommends that, "The first thing is to set up a strong management team ... starting with support from the state office, and then identify and organize a local council ... this larger group should identify and hire a local coordinator to take over site management" (p. 13).

Other human support services. In addition to teachers, programs use (or can use) the services of other specialists on an ongoing basis. However, many programs do not provide these services because they cannot afford them or they adjust other areas of services to provide these additional ones. Described below are the support services commonly mentioned that require a qualified person. This person can donate his/her time – and this happens from time to time. Yet in many cases these persons are needed on an ongoing basis, and are usually paid. Because they affect the cost of operating the program (if the program chooses to use such services), they are mentioned here.

Counseling. Much of the research advocates that counseling be a regular part of the literacy program. The presence of counseling has shown a positive relationship to learner progress (Darling, 1981; Grabowski, 1976). Yet many adult literacy programs operating on shoestring budgets cannot pay for a qualified counselor. Some suggest that counseling be integrated into the teaching methods (thus, having teachers do counseling) to provide for both cognitive and affective development of the learner (U.S. Department of Education, 1988). Whether programs pay for a counselor, or have teachers perform this activity, counseling is a program component that can affect costs.

Reading specialists/diagnostician. Some programs feel the need for a diagnostician to perform the learner assessment exercises. Many feel that tutors or teachers are not qualified to administer tests or do not have the time to perform this function. Interpreting and using results of diagnostic tests is also an important function of instruction, if tests are to be meaningful. Paying a diagnostician to perform the assessment activities can relieve the tutors and teachers of this function, freeing them to teach. However, it should be stressed that information from tests and other assessment forms are crucial to instruction and curriculum. Depending on what decision programs make regarding assessment (e.g., types and numbers of tests/assessments used), this particular component can add to the costs of the program.

Training. Some feel that although volunteers should be praised for their efforts and contribution of their free time to help in the literacy effort, they are not as effective as a trained certificated teaching staff, and that more than a "degree of caring" is necessary to teach adults. Even certified teachers may need to be re-trained to teach adults. As Bowren (1987) states, "Simply training a teacher to teach 'reading' may not be enough. We need to identify a specific set of competencies which are required to teach an adult to read ... few institutions even attempt to train teachers differently for adult reading instruction" (p. 211).

Yet others feel that trained volunteers can be used to teach adults and constitute a very important factor in adult literacy programs (Delker, 1984; Waite, 1984). The issue centers around qualifications and appropriate training. Greenleigh Associates (1966) reported that unsuccessful programs in their study showed "an unrealistically small amount of time was set aside ... for staff training. It was distressing to observe teachers struggling with classes because they were not prepared to teach the skills needed by the class when, in fact, these same teachers, who were endowed with intelligence, sensitivity, and classroom presence, could become fine instructors if they were properly trained" (in Balmuth, 1987; p. 37).

However, in most cases, volunteers do receive some training on selected program materials and teaching methods. Wurzbacher and Yeannakis (1986), for instance, found that tutors in the California Literacy Campaign received an average of 9.5 hours of initial tutoring training. In either case, training is a program component that needs to be ongoing – that is, initial training for beginning tutors or teachers, then continual staff development at various times during the instructional cycle.

In some cases, trainers are paid on an as-needed basis by programs. Also, training can be donated by colleges or parent organizations or included in a grant. Sometimes programs take advantage of training opportunities provided at adult literacy conferences or seminars. Again, as with the above-mentioned components, hiring specialists to train on an ongoing basis has implications for program costs.

Fiscal resources. As Mayer (1985) maintains, programs should have diverse funding sources to protect against cutbacks from any particular sector. Possible sources include private foundations, corporations, federal, state and local governments; federal giving programs such as United Way, and locally devised sources (e.g., charging for materials, training, etc.). This suggestion is particularly important since a diverse funding base will allow programs to branch out into other areas that certain funding sources will not allow.

Harris (1984) recommends that programs start by identifying possible funding sources and professional resources. She points out that "free professional help is just as good as having money and can come off the top of the operations cost." Agreeing with Mayer, she also suggests that "We need to shift to a mix, or partnership, of public and private funding. The diverse funding base gives you more freedom to operate" (p. 5).

As Crandall et al. (1984) point out, program directors spend a great deal of time and energy attempting to secure funding for the survival of their programs. Given the deep cuts in federal and state expenditures in all human service areas, many budgets are being drastically reduced, and this in turn, has taken a serious bite out of services provided" (p. 304).

What are the Costs of Maintaining Programs?

Crandall et al. (1984) found in their survey of 168 literacy programs that group instruction is more cost-effective [than one-on-one tutoring] and enables the organization to offer instruction to more students.

Since different programs provide different types of services (e.g., counseling, referrals) to varying degrees accruing varying costs, it is difficult to put a price tag on typical literacy services. For instance, space is not necessarily a problem for adult schools and community colleges yet CBO's must rent adequate space. Other programs which are reaching out to the "hardest-to-reach" might find it necessary to have a number of locations in the community to attract learners. The cost of renting property varies depending on the neighborhood. On the other hand, program space can be donated, thus saving CBO's substantial costs. The point is, estimating costs for maintaining programs is difficult. Yet in this section, a discussion of the different program components will be reviewed.

The costs of maintaining a program are associated with the type of program and the services the program provides (e.g., child support, counseling, training, etc.). For instance, adult schools and community colleges usually have budgets approved by boards of education or boards of trustees which total into the millions of dollars to pay for teachers, support services, materials, etc., whereas CBO's depend on grants from foundations or corporations.

Even the adult basic education programs are feeling the budget crunch. Crandall et al. (1984) report that "The federal Adult Basic Education program appropriations hover around $100 million annually and serve between two and three million adult learners per year" (p. 305). This number of adults served is well below the 23 million (or 60 million depending on whose figures are used) classified as "functionally illiterate."[7] Crandall cites the situation in California where the state served 600,000 undereducated adults in 1983 and estimates that at this level at least 1,000 undereducated adults have to be turned away every week" (p. 305).

Chisman (1989) reports that "The vast majority of the twenty million plus are not reached by any program that would help them in any way. At most, 3-4 million people are served each year, and an average expenditure per learner is less than $200. Compare that with an average expenditure of more than $4,000 per year for every public school child in the United States" (p. 5).

On the other hand, smaller programs that are community or library-based operate on somewhat smaller budgets. It has been estimated that "... most CBOs operate on budgets that range between

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[7] Data from APL (1975) suggest 23 million functionally illiterate while Kozol (1985) estimates 60 million.

$15,000 and $200,000 per year, usually at the lower end. The financial constraints they work under would be daunting to any conventional enterprise" (BCEL, 1986).

Lane et al. (1984) report in their evaluation of California's library-based literacy programs that a per-pupil expenditure of $200.00 ".. was too low a per capita figure for a start up year ... [and] There are some indications that $500.00 to $750.00 per-student tutored would be more appropriate" (p. 47).

Chall et al. (1987) point out that the approximately $100 million per year of federal funding devoted to literacy programs for adults, when divided among the states, allows an average of only about $160 per student per year. The authors add, "If the criterion of literacy includes those who seek the advanced, high-level skill in reading required of high-tech positions, then the allotment would be approximately 72 cents per student." Even programs receiving federal funds find themselves in need of additional fiscal resources. The authors in the above-mentioned study reported on an exceptionally resourceful program that was able to draw enough financial resources to spend $2,500 per student (p. 193).

Thus, the costs of maintaining programs are increasing. For most programs to stay even, they need more fiscal resources. As Crandall et al. (1984) report, "Raising funds and monitoring budgets has become the major challenge for the manager of a literacy program, and this is equally true regardless if the programs are ABE, volunteer, military, corrections or employment and training" (p. 307).

In order for programs to continue under current funding levels, many find it necessary to eliminate services. As Crandall et al. (1984) argue, "This amounts to not only a reduction of literacy services, but to a loss of diversity of literacy services" (p. 308). For instance, most agree that training is an important component of literacy programs. Yet as Chisman (1989) observes, "Operating with limited budgets, the managers of basic skills programs correctly perceive that every dollar spent on teacher training is a dollar unavailable for providing services. Because they are usually held accountable for the number of hours of instruction provided, or some other crude measure of service, they rarely invest their dollars in teacher training, despite the fact that most teachers say they very much need and want more help" (p. 8).

What are the Leadership Qualities of Those Who Manage the Programs?

An extensive review of leadership qualities in effective adult literacy programs was conducted by Crandall et al. (1984). They found that program directors have two leadership qualities: 1) they possess a clear program philosophy, and 2) they impart that philosophy to others. They impart that philosophy by networking, politicking and acting as a public relations agent for the program. The authors report that program directors who appear to possess clear program philosophies are strikingly more charismatic than those who do not (p. 301). Also, programs benefit from the leaders' networking activities by keeping track of new funding opportunities, knowing of new instructional strategies, and keeping track of new collaborative possibilities.

The program leaders' role in networking was detailed in a report for the Urban Literacy Network (Williams, 1988). The author provides a list of leadership competencies of directors of cooperative urban literacy efforts (although these attributes are clearly significant to leaders of literacy programs not actively engaged in cooperative efforts). They include the following:

- creativity, perspective, confidence, sense of humor,
- system analysis; understanding the complex array of factors that comprise the broad literacy, human service, political, and economic context,
- needs assessment and planning,
- design appropriate structures and organizational arrangements,
- forging effective relationships with diverse individuals and groups,
- translating information across diverse contexts and perspectives,
- facilitating meetings with high stakes agendas and complex dynamics,
- identifying, developing, and implementing core functions,
- resource development,
- conflict resolution and consensus building,
- developing and maintaining a clear vision,
- creating an identity; public relations, and
- evaluating, monitoring, and administering grants.

The author concludes that "The sensitivity and competence of leaders of cooperative efforts is, not surprisingly, a major factor influencing success and long term viability" (p. 9).

Networking is also an important quality for leaders in rural programs as well. Hone (1984) points out that the programs in her study represented many different cooperative arrangements. She states that "...in rural areas where educational resources may be limited to begin with, new programs need to capitalize on all the existing resources they can. Traditional rivalries or 'turf' issues have to be overcome to form a partnership with a common goal: serving the rural student" (p. 15).

In a study of adult literacy programs implementing the California State's Competency-Based Adult Education (CBAE) program, an alternative view of leadership roles was identified. In essence, to facilitate the implementation of the CBAE program, a person or "key communicator" (who was not necessarily the program director) emerged to perform important tasks. The authors explain:

> *The person in this role typically had to handle critical responsibilities as a leader in planning, coordinating, communicating and generally holding together the implementation process in a coherent way (p. 44).*

The need for the program director/leader to have a clear program philosophy has moved some to recommend the implementation of training models for program administrators and staff developers to address these and other issues (Johnson, 1985). For instance, the author recommends that flexible and comprehensive training models should be developed for administrators and staff developers that provide a planning framework and procedures that administrators can use to acquire background information on state-of-the-art activities in literacy education, articulate a program philosophy, assess needs and set goals, identify instructional methods and resources, determine formative and outcome evaluation measures and form community partnerships (p. 17). All of these areas, as this section has shown, are important aspects of the program leader's role.

According to Crandall et al. (1984), leaders also have these two managerial skills: 1) decision making, and 2) problem solving. The problems and decisions that they make concern budgets, fundraising, finding program space and proposal writing. The program director as program leader combines visionary and political prowess with managerial skills such as problem solving and decision making.

The authors further state that program directors need to adjust to the realities of changing funding patterns. For instance, they report that "Program directors who used to see themselves primarily as administrators have to be prepared to become grant writers, developers and public relations specialists." They go on to say that "Programs who are managed by people who can handle this professional conflict, appear to have a distinct competitive advantage in the quest for private funds" (p. 309).

While noting effective characteristics of program directors during their site visits, Crandall et al. (1984) state that, "Those characteristics include both general attitudes toward staff and also concrete actions in implementing a staff development plan. Thus, directors demonstrate their competence through creating a climate for staff growth and through a definite organized structure for staff training" (p. 318).

In the U.S. Department of Education (1988) study, the roles of the program leader were outlined to include the following characteristics:

> * work with staff and students to develop the program philosophy,
>
> * communicate the program philosophy and mission clearly to staff, students, and the outside world,
>
> * make sure that staff and students understand the reasons for doing what the program leader expects of them,
>
> * consult with staff and student representatives in making decisions and solving problems that affect them, and
>
> * provide orientation and regular staff development activities for all staff, paid and volunteer.

In sum, the report states that "It is up to the program director or leader to build the staff into a cohesive team -- a team that also includes the students -- dedicated to accomplishing the mission of the program" (p. 56).

The program leader should take an active role in program evaluation as well (Crandall et al., 1984; U.S. Department of Education, 1988). Willing (1989), while noting that program evaluation is important to program planning, mentions that "There must be a strong leader in the evaluation process. This leader must promote the evaluation process as a strategy for program improvement and must create internal support from the staff for the process to be successful" (p. 5).

The U.S. Department of Education (1988) report suggests that managers can use data from program evaluation to improve staff performance, chart progress and determine the extent to which students are learning, and to make sure that the program is fulfilling its mission. Unfortunately, most program directors are untrained in the techniques of design and measurement and do not have access to this kind of expertise (Johnson, 1985). Thus, the training model mentioned earlier in this section, might serve this author's concerns.

The role of the program leader has been detailed in this section. In essence, the leader wears many hats, and is responsible for maintaining the well-being of the program. The commitment of the staff to work towards achieving program goals is based on the leader modeling appropriate behavior and being flexible to meet the changing needs of the staff and community.

The leader's ability to obtain resources during hard times, keep up staff morale by continual positive reinforcement, and maintain the program's posture in the community as a viable resource are just part of the responsibilities associated with the job. No wonder that exemplary programs have exemplary program leaders (directors) that drive the program and staff in a positive direction.

VI. SUMMARY

The purpose of this review of the literature was to describe the types of adult literacy practices in current use, and identify those practices found to be particularly effective. The review covered several important areas of adult literacy programs while providing suggestions on how programs might improve their service delivery practices.

The review demonstrates the variety of approaches to teaching -- both native English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults. The literature points out the importance of identifying adults' strengths and weaknesses relative to instructional delivery, since this may be the deciding factor -- not only in improving literacy levels -- but in keeping learners in the program. Both learner and teacher perceptions of the reading and writing process were considered an important instructional issue because these perceptions can create barriers to subsequent literacy improvement.

With regard to teaching non-English speaking adults, the literature suggests that programs identify learners' native language literacy levels early, since strategies and skills learned in the first language can be transferred to the second (i.e., English), thus building on learners' strengths (e.g., native literacy skills), and not weaknesses (e.g., inability to speak a second language). For adults with low literacy skills in both the native and second language, the language experience approach (LEA) was suggested as an effective teaching strategy with subsequent integration of content areas. In both cases, the need to teach cognitive skills was recognized.

The review noted the phonics/whole-language debate on teaching adults. Although phonics was found to have a place in instruction, ultimately teaching methods that emphasized "meaning" (or learners' goals) were found to be more popular in adult literacy programs.

Providing meaningful materials for adults was found to be difficult. The review suggested that teacher-made materials based on learner interests and goals could have a positive effect on both literacy improvement and attendance. Further, the LEA -- where materials come from actual writings of the adults themselves -- was found particularly beneficial for both English and non-English- speaking adults.

The literature noted that although many programs used some form of standardized test, most programs were unhappy with them. Programs that used tests used them usually for diagnosis and monitoring of learner progress. Non-standard procedures for evaluating learner progress like the California Adult Learner Progress Evaluation Process (CALPEP), and other goals-based procedures, were identified as potential alternatives or supplements to existing adult progress evaluation procedures. These latter procedures were commonly used at library-based or community-based programs, while standardized tests (and competency-based tests) were more commonly used at the adult school or community college level.

Program evaluation was mentioned as an important component to program operations. In fact, evaluation was considered to be an important benefit to programs in that they could monitor progress toward reaching their goals and report successes to funding agencies. The leadership qualities of successful program managers included their overseeing of such evaluations.

Outreach and recruitment efforts that emphasized the unique nature of adult education and the confidential nature of the program appeared to successfully attract learners. Further, programs that addressed the various "situational barriers" confronting adults (e.g., child care, transportation) were successful in attracting participants. Generally speaking, programs that assessed their service delivery area to understand learner needs, community resources, and special learner circumstances were in an excellent position to provide quality services to participants.

The literature review noted the importance of keeping learners, once recruited, in the program. Programs that provided time for parents to socialize were able to "keep them coming back for more." The review suggested that programs should find out why learners come for tutoring, and address those reasons directly (e.g., self-improvement, work-related). Further, it was pointed out that instruction and materials used in programs could have a direct impact on learner retention rates. That is, when programs designed instruction and used materials related to learners' goals, retention levels increased. Thus, when instruction was seen as relevant and materials as interesting, programs were in a better position to retain learners.

One very important characteristic of effective programs was the presence of a charismatic leader. This person "held the program together" through good times and bad. This person diversified the program's funding base, and continually had a "finger on the pulse" of the program via monitoring techniques (e.g., staff relations skills, evaluation). Program managers (i.e., leaders) utilized numerous resources (e.g., community, private) to achieve program goals.

In sum, this review -- which included descriptions of program practices and research studies -- identified several successful factors related to running an adult literacy program. The need for adult literacy services is growing and branching out to various service delivery sectors (e.g., workplace, family programs). As such, programs will need to bear in mind that each program operates in a slightly different context. Resources, both human and fiscal, coupled with location, makes each adult literacy program slightly (or very) different from each other. Nonetheless, findings from this study should certainly provide programs with ideas about program practices along with a description of those practices that have been successful in servicing adult learners in various service delivery contexts.

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